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ABSTRACT

"GED Items" is published bimonthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. This volume contains six issues, each containing several articles related to adult education, equivalency testing, and the General Educational Development (GED) program. The first issue features an article by Frederick Stadler on the successful performance of GED graduates at a technical college and an article by Carole Totten on the lack of a formal infrastructure for adult basic and GED education. Approximately 84% of all paid adult education teachers are "part-time," virtually "throwaway" employees. The second issue features a discussion of technology in the adult education environment and the profile of a successful GED graduate. In issue three, the story of Admiral Mike Boorda, a GED graduate who went on to become the first enlisted person to be named Chief of Naval Operations, is the lead article. In 1995, as described in issue 4/5, Indiana became the 44th jurisdiction to issue diplomas to adults who pass GED tests, joining 29 U.S. states, 6 Canadian provinces, and 8 U.S. territories. Issue 6 reports on the GED-National Adult Literacy Survey of the document, prose, and quantitative literacy skills of adults in the United States. Each issue also contains "Teaching Tips" for teacher improvement, graduate profiles, and other articles and information related to GED testing. (Contains one table and three graphs.) (SLD)

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ED 412 251

**Volume 12, No. 1-6** **Date: Jan-Dec 1995**

# GED *Items*

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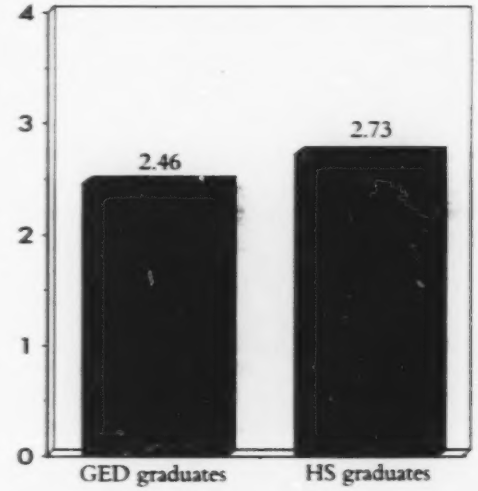
GED Items more than 24,000 readers

# Study Finds GED Grads Comparable to Traditional Grads at Milwaukee Area Technical College

by Frederick Stadler

The results of a study completed in the fall of 1994 show that the GED population at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) achieved considerable success in college courses over a three year period and that their achievement compares favorably with that of traditional high school graduates.

Nearly 60% of the grades earned by GED graduates were "C-" (2.00 GPA) or above. More than 20% of the grades were recorded as either Satisfactory ("S") or Withdrawal Passing ("W"). Only 16.5% of the coursework completed by GED graduates was listed in the "D" or "U" (Unsatisfactory) category. The average grade point average (GPA) for a cross-section of selected programs was 2.46 for the GED population. Traditional high school graduates averaged a 2.73 GPA.




**In a cross-section of selected programs, GED graduates at Milwaukee Area Technical College earned an average GPA of 2.46 on the traditional four-point grade scale. During the same time period, traditional high school graduates earned an average GPA of 2.73.**

The study found that the score a GED graduate earned on the GED Tests did make a difference concerning the GPA he or she earned in college classes. Those who earned a total score of 250 or better achieved an overall GPA of 2.47 over the length of the study. GED diploma holders who earned a total score of 225-249 achieved a GPA of 2.07.

This GED research study, undertaken as a doctoral dissertation, concerned the performance of GED credential holders who enrolled at Milwaukee Area Technical College between 1989 and 1992.

MATC is a four-campus urban area Technical/Community College, with a yearly enrollment of more than 70,000 full- and part-time students. Nearly 1900 students registered as GED graduates when they enrolled in classes at MATC during the period studied. The study documents which of the college's programs the 1877 students enrolled in, and the levels of success they achieved. During the study, GED completers took 24,218 courses.

Other factors reviewed in the study include the number of credits taken and earned as well as grade point averages. Factors of age, sex,

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# Sounding our Own Voices — the Key to Professionalizing Adult Education

Two articles in this issue stand in stark contrast to one another. The cover story by Frederick Stadler focuses on the successful performance of GED graduates at Milwaukee Area Technical College. The other, *"Throwaway" Teachers*, by teacher Carole Totten, describes the lack of formal infrastructure for the field of adult basic and GED education.

Without the thousands of volunteers and part-time teachers, there would be no adult education system at all in most parts of the United States and Canada. These dedicated individuals carry the adult education system on their backs—often at considerable personal cost. On the one hand, we are warmed by findings such as those that Stadler reports. On the other, Totten's description of adult education as a marginal profession is a problem that belongs to us all. Like everyone, adult educators have families to raise, children to educate, parents to care for. As Carole Totten so passionately describes, they need—and deserve—jobs that provide planning time, staff development opportunities, sick leave and the benefits full-time teachers and other trained professionals take for granted.

The lead-in on the facing page says, "One woman's story starts the dialogue..." I hope that it will. *GED Items*, now with a circulation of more than 24,000, belongs to you—the teachers and examiners in the GED program (Where are the other 160,000 adult educators?). It can serve as a forum for your ideas about how to make long-term efforts toward developing a real system.

If it were easy to build a strong educational system for adults, we would already have one. It is difficult because of the diversity of adult learners and the programs tailored to fit their needs. It is difficult because adult educators often work with their students in isolation and are frequently not part of a group where they can find inspiration and support. It is difficult because, in the present political climate, there is opposition to "excess" government spending, an emphasis on short-term results, and a focus almost entirely on employment. And it is difficult because of the lack of teacher-supporting infrastructure such as that Totten describes.

The irony is that North Americans of all political backgrounds are inspired by our achievements. We epitomize the democratic values that shaped the United States and Canada: second chances, opportunities to work and grow. And what we do makes a difference. Ask any one of the GED graduates at Milwaukee Area Technical College.

Our task is difficult, but it's possible. We'll have to act collectively. In addition to the hours that we've already committed, we'll have to make time to tell everyone what we've been doing. We need to tell our stories and those of our students—not just to each other, but to our entire communities: employers, the media, civic and church leaders, secondary and postsecondary educators, and, of course, our political leaders. It's very difficult for politicians to cut a program when they know they represent people who have moved forward in their lives with that program's help. It is our job to keep faces on the statistics.

The GED graduates described by Frederick Stadler are real people. So are the other 800,000 GED examinees and the many students who enroll in ABE programs each year. The public needs to understand this, as do the politicians and the media. We must tell them. Then tell them again. And again. Only when they perceive the value of our work will we be in a position to accord the more than 150,000 marginal adult educators the professional status they deserve and need to help build a strong and effective adult education system. Please let us at the GED Testing Service know what you are doing; we'll do our best to spread the word.

—*JHL*

*If you have a story, a success, or an opinion to share, send it to: Lisa Richards, Editor, GED Items, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20036-1163.*

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# "Throwaway" Teachers Face Challenges as Backbone of Adult Education System

***Approximately 84 per cent of all paid adult education teachers are classified as "part-time" employees. What are the implications for people? For programs? One woman's story starts the dialogue...***

**by Carole Totten**

As an ABE/JOBS teacher, one of my responsibilities is to teach job seeking skills to my students. Last month, my class and I discussed an article in the newspaper about recent trends in employment. One of the disturbing trends in the article mentioned was that many employers, in order to save money for the company, will hire an employee on a permanent part-time basis with no paid holidays or sick days and no benefits. The theory is that, since unemployment is high and a large pool of qualified workers exists, these employees, who are initially grateful for any employment, can be easily replaced when they become dissatisfied with their part-time status. For this reason they are called "throwaway" employees. I warned my students to be wary of such jobs, because, even though they provide needed experience, they are generally dead-end jobs which will never provide an income on which one can live.

The reason I know so much about it is that I am a "throwaway" employee. I have an education degree that I worked very hard to get. However, there are no full-time jobs for teachers in my home county or any surrounding counties. At first, I was grateful for the steady income provided by my part-time, hourly job with the Kanawha County ABE/JOBS program. Then I began to consider the facts: As a part-time instructor, I teach four days a week for five hours a day with no lunch period. The sixth hour of the day, which is ostensibly my planning time, is spent allowing my students to make up any hours they might have missed. Since my students are in the room during my planning period, and it is impossible for me to tell them that I can't help them because I have paperwork to do, I effectively teach all six hours and then stay late to do the required paperwork and plan for instruction. I regularly spend my day off and weekend trying to catch up on weekly, monthly, and annual reports, as well as trying to plan effective instruction for a program based on group and individualized learning with a constantly changing population.

On the other hand, full-time teachers in my county are paid for an eight hour day with an hour for lunch and an hour planning time, which means that they actually teach six hours a day. I feel exploited by a system that counts on me to do a good job by giving full-time devotion and professionalism in return for part-time, hourly compensation.

I have another serious problem, too. I have, unfortunately, fallen in love with my job. We all look for meaning and purpose in our lifetime's work, and I have found that meaning and purpose in my job working with Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) clients. They are, for various reasons, at the bottom of society's economic and social structure, but they are worth the effort it takes to become productive and active members of society. I am proud to be a part of the partnership between DHHR and the Department of Education in this eminently worthy effort.

For this reason, I have decided that the old saying "anything worth having is worth fighting for" applies to me. Instead of following the formula in the throwaway employee theory, which assumes that dissatisfied employees will quit (and no one will care), I have decided to fight for

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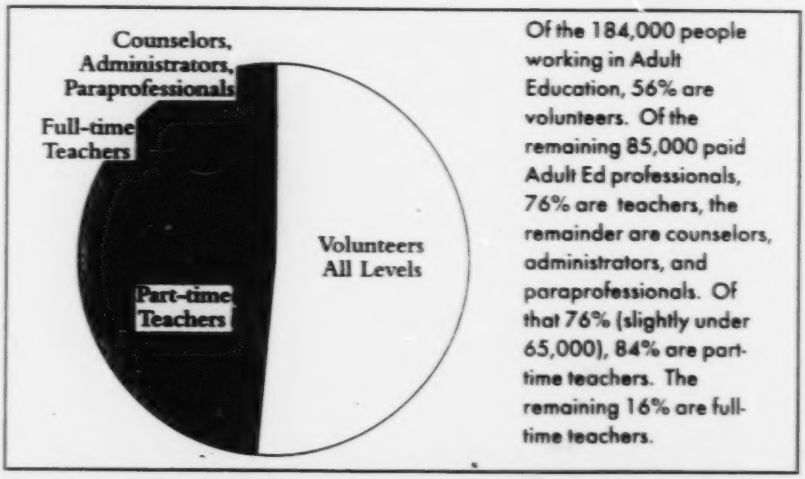


Of the 184,000 people working in Adult Education, 56% are volunteers. Of the remaining 85,000 paid Adult Ed professionals, 76% are teachers, the remainder are counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals. Of that 76% (slightly under 65,000), 84% are part-time teachers. The remaining 16% are full-time teachers.

**Graph based on data provided by U.S. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy. Data gathered from state-provided data for 1993 program year.**

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# Procedures for Ordering Testing Materials Requre Care, Attention to Details, Policies

Some time back GEDTS staff received what seemed to be a complete set of papers for annual contract renewal. Included were the pink copy of the contract, the signed test security memo, and an order form. As it turns out, the papers weren't entirely in order. Across the top of the order form, the new Chief Examiner had written, "Do not need any materials at this time."

As experienced Examiners know, new testing materials must be ordered at the beginning of each contract year. Also, old testing materials must be returned to GEDTS at the end of each contract year. The Chief Examiner and Institutional Chief Administrative Officer agree to these conditions when they sign the Annual Contract, and a center may be closed for violating this agreement. If your center cannot meet these conditions, please contact the GED Testing Service or your GED Administrator.

A center must order at least two different forms of the English print test. Each test booklet may be used up to 15 times, so calculate the number of booklets needed by dividing the previous year's testing volume by 13—to allow for volume increases. If you run short of batteries during the contract year, you must order more batteries at the full price, so it's best to order enough early on. GEDTS will not ship testing materials until we receive the signed pink copy of the contract, order form, and the signed test security memo.

It is extremely important that the contract, the order form, and the test security memo all contain your Center ID number, address information and Chief Examiner's signature. If, for instance, your order form were to become separated from your contract, the staff at GEDTS would have no way of identifying your order from among the hundreds of orders we receive at a time. This causes a delay in filling your order and slows our ability to serve your counterparts at other centers.

Ordering materials properly saves both GEDTS and your testing center time and money. For non-profit organizations, small expenses add up fast. The extra time and effort it takes on both ends to correct a problem take their toll as well. Please follow instructions, ask questions—take that extra moment beforehand—to make sure your order is accurate and complete.

*For information about ordering materials please refer to the back of the order form and Section 4.3-2 of the 1993 Examiners' Manual.*

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| Insulated lunch bags, blue w/white logo | $7.50 |
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# An Arthurian Quest: In Search of the Perfect Essay Prompt...

by Arthur M. Halbrook

In the 1800s, one English teacher changed the course of essay writing. When students returned in the fall to begin classes, the teacher told them to write about what they did on their summer vacations. Essay writing would never be the same thereafter.

Since that time, the creation of the perfect essay prompt has truly become a quest.

In many respects, this quest takes on the characteristics of Arthurian tale—prompts so good that Guinevere would blush, so bad that Merlin's magic couldn't save them, so complex that Arthur could not slice through the verbiage with Excalibur (Lancelot is not included here because he was still busy with the multiple-choice questions on Part 1).

Last spring, the General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) asked writers to contribute to the GED Prompt Bank and as a result, several hundred essay prompts poured in. What was so striking about the prompts was the richness of the questions being asked, the diversity of the subject matter, and demands made on the test taker. Only a few prompts made it. About 24 passed GEDTS' rigid criteria.

*Is there the perfect prompt, a prompt that adheres to all specifications, a prompt to which all test takers can respond with equal success, a prompt with universal appeal?*

What, then, makes for an effective prompt? As the stimulus material, a good prompt grows from, first and foremost, a good idea—a question or issue that significantly touches the experience of people anywhere from 17 to 90 years old, who come from richly diverse backgrounds.

Assessment programs such as the GED are continually searching for prompts that allow the student's powers of expression and communication to be stimulated to the maximum level.

Educators and researchers agree that certain traits are essential to a good essay prompt: clarity, validity, reliability, and interest. From these traits have evolved GEDTS' prompt guidelines:

### The prompt should be potentially interesting to writers.

Here the emphasis is not on one writer, not a class of writers, not a school of writers, but writers in general. It is, true that not all writers will find every topic interesting. However, the prompt should possess certain inherent characteristics that provide a catalyst for thought.

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**The prompt should be potentially interesting to the essay readers.**

It may sound strange, but if the subject fails to interest the readers, then reading a large number of papers each day on the same subject and grading them according to GEDTS' holistic scale can prove a strenuous task. If the prompt is one that fosters substantial reflection and a broad range of responses, the professional reader who scores hundreds of essays daily will be better able to remain interested and examine each paper's merit on the holistic scale with the attention it deserves.

**The prompt should be meaningful to the writer.**

How often have we had to write on a prompt about which we asked that famous question, "Do we hafta?" However, meaningful does not equal controversial. A controversial, emotionally charged topic can elicit a response in which substantive writing takes a back seat to defensive and sometimes offensive rhetoric.

**The prompt must take into account the diversity of the population being testing.**

Perhaps the key issue in prompt development, this question should be considered whenever a prompt for large-scale assessment such as the GED is being constructed. The prospective prompt writer may profit from a simple observation on population diversity. On a given day, the GED Tests are administered to trappers in Alaska and Canada, immigrants, executives, single parents, prisoners, Pacific Islanders, farmers, young inner-city adults, seniors, and people with disabilities. These are but a few of the many types of individuals who take the tests.

*A good prompt grows from, first and foremost, a good idea—a question or issue that significantly touches the experience of people anywhere from 17 to 90 years old, who come from richly diverse backgrounds.*

**The language usage within the prompt should be readily understood and should exclude cultural bias.**

If a term is central to the meaning of the prompt and the likelihood exists that the test taker might be confused, that term must be explained within the text of the prompt. Moreover, the prompt should not incorporate language or issues that might be unfamiliar to certain groups, such as questions that require a specific understanding of a particular religion, custom, or region.

**The prompt should permit the student to rely on prior knowledge but it should not demand extensive prior knowledge, especially that of a technical or historical nature.**

Not all GED examinees are active newspaper readers, TV news watchers, moviegoers, or regular visitors to the library. For this reason, to ask about the space program or politics might disadvantage many writers. Although the many writers who take the GED Tests each year may be knowledgeable in many areas, an individual's knowledge of space exploration or political intrigue might be limited.

In a very similar manner, an essay prompt which focuses on the Vietnam conflict can prove difficult or unfair for the increasing number of examinees who were very young —or even unborn—at the time or

*continued on page 9*

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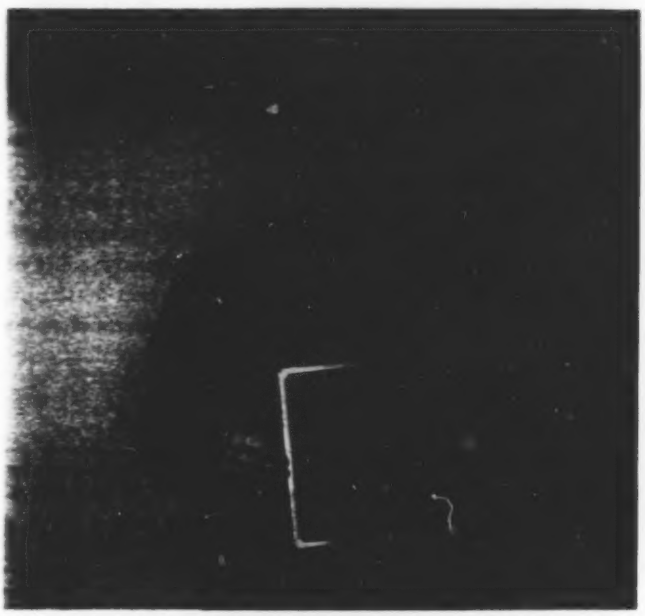
## GED Graduate Story

Four years ago, Scott was in a coma. One year ago, he earned his GED diploma. Three months ago, he traveled to Nashville to accept an award as Adult Learner of the Year from the Tennessee Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

Scott Dabney, of Clinton, TN, quit tenth grade in 1987. On Christmas Eve 1990, he suffered injuries in an automobile accident that left him partially paralyzed and in a coma for three months. The car wreck led Scott to evaluate his life, and as a result, he made some "major changes." He returned to school—with a vengeance! While attending both day and evening classes at the Anderson County Adult Literacy Program, Scott learned to use both Apple and IBM computers and improved his skills from Level I to Level III in eight months. According to the program's director, Jenny Parris, "He was here so much we locked him in the building one time."



**Clinton, TN resident Scott Dabney was named Tennessee's Adult Learner of the Year by TAACE in Nashville last fall.**

She says at first he was reluctant to attend classes where, he says, he thought other students would laugh at him for the "funny" walk he developed as a result of the accident. Scott started working with Janie Bollinger, a teacher who retired after a stroke. When they met, she walked with a three-pronged metal cane. She says they were "two broken down people" working together. The problem of walking "funny" resolved itself and Scott began working his way through the Anderson County programs. And although the paralysis meant that Scott also had to learn to write with his left hand, his handwriting is still legible.

When Scott first approached the Center, an evaluator recommended he be placed in a vocational program. The vocational rehabilitation counselor then recommended Scott be trained to become a desk security guard. Scott said he wanted more than that. He reacted to the evaluation by focusing and intensifying his efforts.

Today, Scott jogs several miles a day. Accepted into a Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) training program, he hopes to become a shoreline inspector for the agency. Says Jenny Parris, "Scott is an example of what can be accomplished by any adult education student if the motivation is high enough."

## College Fair Dates Set

The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) sponsors the National College Fair each year. Upcoming dates are:

**Indianapolis, IN**
March 5 12–4:30pm
Indianapolis Convention Center

**Springfield, MA**
March 12 12–4:30pm
March 13 9am–1pm
Eastern States Exposition

**Boston, MA**
April 4 9am–1pm, 6–9pm
April 5 9am–1pm
Hynes Convention Center

**Charlotte, NC**
April 9 12–5pm
Charlotte Merchandise Mart

*For more information ✉ NACAC, 1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2818 ☎ (703) 836-2222.*

## NALS Prison Study Finds GED Holders Have Advantage

*Literacy Behind Prison Walls*, a new report from the U.S. Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics, examines similarities and differences between prisoners and adults in households. Among the findings in the report:

• Prisoners with 9-12 years of schooling outperform those with 0-8 years of schooling, and those with a high school diploma outperform those with 9-12 years of schooling.

• Inmate GED holders appear to have an advantage over those with a high school diploma. GED holders in prison have literacy proficiency similar to those in households. In contrast, high school graduates in prisons have lower literacy proficiency than those in households.



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# Turney Manzer, Canadian GED Pioneer, to Retire in 1995

*Turney C. Manzer, who has served as GED Administrator for the Province of Nova Scotia for 26 years, steps down this spring. Nova Scotia was the first Canadian jurisdiction to offer the GED Tests, thanks largely to Turney's efforts. Following is part of a recent letter.*

### An Open Letter to My Friends

After 26 years and meeting with so many of you at our annual meetings over those years I hope I can call you my friends. It has been with pride that I've been a member of the GED family for that time and I'm pleased that as I went from position to position in the Department of Education that I was able to persuade the department that I should take the GED Program with me on the moves.

With all the many things I've done during my working years I can truly say that the most rewarding employment was my connection with GED. I could never get over the awesome responsibility we have and the effect we have on so many lives due to success in the program. Even those who may not be successful the first time can be encouraged to continue studying and working to improve and it is often these who give even more satisfaction when they finally meet the high standards that are set.

I will be handing over my responsibilities to Paula Millman in January although I will still be around to help her for a couple of months after that. I am sure you will go out of your way to welcome her to your meetings and to give her the same sound advice and help you have given me over the years.

> *"I could never get over the awesome responsibility we have and the effect we have on so many lives..."*

To the wonderful staff at GED Testing Services I can only give my thanks for the many years of dedicated service you have given to me and the other administrators and say I will really miss you all.

*Turney Manzer is the Assistant Director of Research, Testing and Evaluation, Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2021 Brunswick Street, P.O. Box 578, Halifax, NS B3J 2S9, Canada.*

*"Throwaway" from page 3*

full-time status. I strongly encourage all other ABE/JOBS teachers who feel as I do to write to their superiors on the county, state, and federal levels. It would be nice if administrators on the county, state, and federal levels would quit squabbling about whose department has the responsibility to make this decision and just get together and do the right thing.

As instructors, we are told at conferences, inservices, and staff meetings (which, by the way, we are generally not paid to attend but are expected to attend anyway) that our professionalism is appreciated and that we are the foundation of the whole program. Administrators on each level need to be aware that this foundation, which provides the basis for their (full-time) employment, is in danger of crumbling if instructors continued to be treated as peripheral and "throwaway" employees.

*Carole Totten lives in Charleston, West Virginia. She now works as a full-time instructor at a Kanawha County adult learning center.*

The preceding article first appeared as an opinion piece in the January/February 1994 issue of NETWORKS, West Virginia's Literacy and Adult Education Newsletter.


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## COABE Slated for June

The Arkansas Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education hosts the Commission on Adult Basic Education 1995 national conference June 6-9, 1995.

Offerings at the conference will include six pre-conference institutes and about 200 concurrent sessions on various topics of interest to professionals and volunteers involved in public, private, college, business and industry, and basic skills instruction for adults. ✉ 1995 COABE Conference Office, 1504 Caldwell, Conway, AR 73032 ☎ (501) 336-9930.

## Association Supports Lifelong Learning

The National Association of Returning Students (NARS), is a national non-profit adult student support organization. NARS provides information on forms of college financing and scholarships and issues a monthly newsletter, *Transitions*, which contains information on and for adult students and college staff working with adults.

NARS works to "alert and educate academic institutions to the needs of the adult students population" and "promote the participation of the business community, and of business and political leaders in providing economic and moral support of nontraditional students." Memberships: $15/yr. student, $100/yr. college. Subscription to *Transitions* $32 per year. ✉ Director, Membership Services, NARS, P.O. Box 3283, Salem, OR 97302 ☎ (503) 581-3731, FAX: (503) 362-2123.

### Legend

| | |
|---|---|
| ✉ | mailing address |
| ☎ | telephone number |
| *I:* | internet address |

## Family Literacy Conference Underway in April

The Fourth Annual National Conference on Family Literacy takes place April 23-25 1995 at the Galt House in Louisville KY. Keynote speakers include former first lady Barbara Bush, Alex Kotlowitz, author of *There Are No Children Here*, and *Parade* magazine editor Walter Anderson. The conference theme, "Creating a Community of Learners — Touching Tomorrow Today", celebrates the family literacy movement's success as a catalyst for systemic change.

Along with the general conference schedule, special sessions will cover related programs such as Head Start, Even Start, adult education, corporation-backed initiatives, ESL, Native American programs and others. For registration materials, ✉ National Center for Family Literacy Waterfront Plaza Suite 200 325 West Main Street Louisville KY 40202-4250, Dept. C. ☎ Kerry Bickel or Ardith Hannula 502-584-1133.

## New Directory Helps Field Navigate Internet

Many adult educators feel illiterate when it comes to tapping into computer information resources, so take heart! There's help for the technologically challenged. Thomas Eland, coordinator of the Minnesota/South Dakota Regional Adult Literacy Resource Center, has published the *Internet Directory of Literacy and Adult Education Resources*. The guide is $3. Checks payable to the University of St. Thomas. ✉ Minnesota/South Dakota Regional Adult Literacy Resource Center, University of St. Thomas, Mail #5019, 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105 ☎ (612) 962-5570; FAX: (612) 962-5406. *I:* tweland@stthomas.edu.

## New Administrators Take the Wheel

Six men and women recently joined the GED program as GED Administrators: Steve Gilles, Wisconsin ☎ 608-266-1723; Nace Macaluso, Alabama ☎ 205-242-8181/8182; Murray Mezaros, Utah ☎ 801-538-7870; Cheryl Lelick, Department of Justice ☎ 202-724-3022; Marlis Miller, Oregon ☎ 503-378-8648 ext. 359; Paula Millman, Nova Scotia ☎ (902) 424-5636.

"GED Administrator" is the title used for the person who oversees GED testing at the state, provincial, or territorial level.

## Submit to ERIC

ERIC/ACVE needs your help to ensure that high-quality, comprehensive materials for adult, career, and vocational education make it into the ERIC system. Contact the Acquisitions Coordinator for information on submitting research reports, conference presentations, speeches, program or project descriptions, or other materials to be reviewed for possible inclusion in the ERIC database.

Updates in the ERIC systems include AskERIC, an Internet based electronic library and online question-answering service, including information specifically geared for adult ed. In the coming year, ERIC plans to provide full-text online access to new documents indexed in the database and better Internet access to the database. ✉ ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, The Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 ☎ (614) 292-4353 or (800) 848-4815; FAX: (614) 292-1260. *I:* ericacve@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu.



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# EDP Graduates Achieve Further Success

by Katherine Lowndes

Adults who decide to enroll in the External Diploma Program (EDP) often do so for personal satisfaction, then end up using their successful completion of the EDP process as a stepping stone to further accomplishments. Although two-thirds of EDP graduates saw personal satisfaction as the most important motivator for taking the EDP, the next goal was "admission to college."

Surveys show that after completing the EDP, about 40 percent of EDP graduates go on to postsecondary education. Completing the EDP often gives graduates increased levels of self confidence in learning, as well as motivation to succeed in professional and personal arenas.

Petronilla ("Nilla") Breda Newman first learned about the External Diploma Program in 1983, in an article entitled "Never Too Old To Learn" in a small northern Virginia paper. The writer described the EDP as a non-traditional means to achieve a high school diploma, involving work at home and one-on-one meetings with trained Assessors rather than sitting in classrooms. Nilla left school early to earn an income after her parents died, so she kept the article in a safe place. It was to come in handy one day.

EDP graduate Nilla Newman earned her BA *summa cum laude* in 1992.

In 1984, after the end of her marriage, Nilla decided "to do something for [her]self." She wanted to go back to school, and felt EDP was the perfect program for her, since it was designed for adults who had been out of school for several years and had acquired skills in the workplace and/or at home. She then called the local adult education office and attended an EDP information session. Nilla completed the EDP and obtained her high school diploma in 1985, then enrolled at Northern Virginia Community College that same year.

While taking evening courses (and working each day) she graduated *cum laude* with an associate's degree in 1990. National-Louis University in McLean, VA, was next. Nilla graduated with a BA, *summa cum laude*, in June 1992. Soon after, she was promoted to Assistant Representative at Banca Commerciale Italiana in Washington, D.C., where she remained until the Italian government closed the bank's branch in 1994.

Now Nilla works as the Program Services Coordinator for the National External Diploma Program. In her new position, she hopes to pass on to prospective EDP adopters and candidates her enthusiasm for the program and her message that it is never too late to learn—or use the EDP to go to college.

For information on the EDP, call Nilla at the American Council on Education, (202) 939-9478.

*Katherine Lowndes is Assistant Director of the External Diploma Program.*

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*Grail, from page 4*

those who had little exposure to the conflict's wide-ranging aspects.

### The prompt should emphasize the positive aspects of life.

The GED prompts incorporate, to every degree possible, what might be interpreted as a "feel-good" approach to writing. In writing, the test taker must explore many facets of an issue. However, what seems to surface most predominately—in the newer prompts especially—is an emphasis on experiences and outcomes which can be considered by the writer in a positive light.

### Fairness, Effectiveness are the goals

A prompt must incorporate a number of essential criteria to be fair and effective, and as anyone who has worked with prompt development will concede, writing a good prompt is difficult! Research has shown that one of every ten large-scale assessment prompts submitted finally makes it to the final review stages.

Is there, somewhere in the realm of standardized testing, the perfect prompt, a prompt that adheres to all specifications, a prompt to which all test takers can respond with equal success, a prompt that holds universal appeal?

While I do believe that Camelot existed, I doubt that a perfect essay prompt exists either here or beyond the next rainbow. However, all good knights must ride on, faithful to their quest. Like the members of the Round Table, our search continues.

*Arthur M. Halbrook is the Writing Assessment Specialist at the GED Testing Service.*

*Grads Compare, from page 1*

and race were also documented, and compared with the level of success for GED completers in respective programs. The study found, however, that age, sex, and race could not be used to predict achieved GPA.

*The study found that the score a GED graduate earned on the GED Tests did make a difference concerning the GPA he or she earned in college classes.*

*Frederick Stadler, Ph.D. is the Instructional Chair of the Reading Department at Milwaukee Area Technical College, 700 West State Street, Milwaukee, WI 53233, (414) 297-7364.*

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# Technology in the Adult Ed Environment

## *Pie in the Sky, á la Modem?*

In many offices, telephone messages don't come on little pink slips of paper any more; they appear on the computer screen at the worker's desk. Today, some students research, write and print their papers at their own computers. A decade ago, professors accepted reports written in ball-point pen.

Technological advances are changing the ways in which we think, talk, act, do business—and the way we learn. What do we keep and what do we throw away? What is of greatest benefit to our students? Educators at all levels need to seek answers to these questions.

### The Cyber Classroom

Fast-moving technological changes are affecting adult education programs in several ways. For example, distance learning, in the form of satellite teleconferences, TV study courses such as *GED on TV*, is increasingly familiar to adults of all educational levels.

As the equipment that provides the link between an instructor's location and the sites where students tap in to the instruction gets less expensive, distance learning will grow more prevalent. Such techniques provide exposure to a range of subjects that might otherwise be unavailable to learners isolated in rural areas or studying under mobility or time constraints.

Interactive multimedia, in which the learner navigates through a system of information modules or lessons that integrate sound, graphics, text, and video, is at the forefront of instruction for all age and ability levels. Learners using interactive multimedia are personally involved, controlling the sequence and pace of the instruction to fit their needs and preferences.

*"Multimedia learners have the opportunity to gain critical technology skills that they will need in the workplace of the future." — Nancy Engler, educational consultant*

As directors of their own learning, they can select what they want to learn about next, or repeat a segment they didn't understand. According to educational consultant Nancy Engler, "Multimedia learners have the opportunity to gain critical technology skills that they will need in the workplace of the future, where such information storage and retrieval methods will become more common."

### The Paperless Administrator

As the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) phases out hand-scoring, computerized scanners will be the standard tools for scoring answer sheets. In some areas, testing centers are forming consortia for scoring purposes. With several testing centers supporting it, a centrally located scoring center scans answer sheets, forwards records to the GED Administrator and sends try-out data to GEDTS. Elsewhere, the operation is centralized. The GED Administrator takes on scanning, scoring and reporting for the jurisdiction or finds a government or other qualified entity to perform the needed functions (see Section 12, *GED Examiner's Manual*).

The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, GED Division is developing a centralized scoring system. According to Georgia's GED Administrator, Bob Wofford, "It's a huge undertaking, and we're still in the developing stages, but it's a model innovation because this is the way business and government will run in the future."

When the system is in full operation, with a target date for implementation a few months away, GED Examiners at Georgia's 100-plus testing centers will be able to fax

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## From the Director

# Keeping Pace With Technology

When I came to GEDTS eight years ago, we had several word processing machines that a staff person could schedule for two to three hours a day. I was really impressed. At the school I had come from, there was a computer in the main office and a few more in the business education lab. During my second year at GEDTS, the question became how we could justify the expense of having computers at some staff members' desks.

If someone had told us then that we'd soon be computer-dependent and complaining about the time it takes to print a document, we'd have laughed. If I'd heard that our staff would take computers along on business trips so they could keep in touch with the GED office via modem, I'd never have believed it.

Computers are now so common-place, they're virtually invisible to us. People use them in many daily transactions—analyzing a car's emissions, keeping customer drug profiles at the pharmacy, ordering a hamburger, or withdrawing money from the bank's automatic teller machine (ATM).

When GEDTS completed specifications for the 1988 GED Tests, technology was to be recognized in two ways: first, while they would not measure computer literacy directly, the tests were to support the concept that technology was creating a "global village" and accelerating the rate of change in society; and second, we planned to allow calculators on the mathematics test. We've carried out the first of these worthy intentions; the second was still too revolutionary to implement in 1988.

What does this mean for the next generation of GED Tests and the operation of testing centers? Should we include technology as a subject area? Do we permit students to use a calculator on the math test or should we develop specific questions to measure their ability to use a calculator? Do we allow essays to be written and spell-checked on computers? What should be the policy about allowing test score reports to be faxed or sent by modem? How can technology speed up the delivery of test batteries to GED Testing Centers? How do we maintain confidentiality when we store examinee records on computer? What about administering the tests on computer? Should we follow the example of the GRE Tests or licensing exams that are given at private learning centers?

*...as educators, we have a duty to understand these new information tools and instruct adults in their use. Simply put, people who don't learn to use them will be left behind.*

We've come a long way in eleven years. Now we're trying to figure out where we need to be ten years from today. How fast will the use of computers and other technologies for instruction and assessment grow?

While I don't have the answer, I do know that change is coming sooner than we as adult educators will be ready. In addition, adult programs are often the step-children of other educational institutions and our audience may therefore have fewer opportunities to become familiar with technology.

Nevertheless, as educators, we have a duty to understand these new information tools and instruct adults in their use. Simply put, people who don't learn to use them will be left behind.

In this issue of *GEDItems*, we invite you to join us in thinking about how to use the technological resources around us. In future issues we will explore certain aspects of instructional technology in greater depth. For example, Nancy Engler's work, ***Bibliography of Multimedia Instructional Materials for Adults***, will soon be available through GEDTS.

In the meantime, we want to know what you have to share with other readers about your experiences in helping adult learners to use technology. What would you like to see happen? What tools do you need? Please let us know so that we can pass your knowledge on to others.

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# Demystifying the Internet

***So what is the Internet and why is everyone talking about it?***

In reality an international network of networks, the Internet is constructed by groups of institutions getting together and contributing to or forming their own regional networks. Collectively, these networks join universities, school systems, businesses, government agencies, and numerous other groups worldwide (Eisenberg and Ely 1993).

These networks are based on TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). Originally a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) standard protocol, TCP/IP is one indication that the Internet originated as a DOD network approximately 20 years ago. Following almost exclusive use by the military research community from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the Internet became the domain of academic computing professionals. From the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, universities began to group together to form regional networks that in turn were connected to the Internet. During this period, the National Science Foundation (NSF) provided funding support for supercomputing centers and regional networks. The NSF networking efforts were important because they opened up access to the network beyond the research community. Since the early 1990s, a variety of electronic networks have developed connections, and the Internet has become accessible to users beyond the research and academic communities (Gates 1993). Most of the new users are not the government officials, researchers, and academics for whom the Internet was designed, but are members of the general public, including school children and adults from many professions (J. Seabrook, "My First Flame," *New Yorker*, June 6, 1994).

Although the Internet is used most frequently for e-mail communication, other uses include providing access to bulletin boards, mailing lists (known as listservs), and informational and interpersonal resources that make the Internet such a veritable treasure trove, but finding exactly what is available can still be a "hit or miss" proposition. Fortunately, staff at several universities have "created user-friendly tools that can help you to search the interconnected Internet domains and find information in ways other than by chance" (Harris 1993, p. 7).

Gopher, developed at the University of Minnesota, is the best known of these tools. A user-friendly, menu-driven information organizer, Gopher is designed to go for the desired information without the requestor having to know where it is going. Many Gopher sites are directly accessible and open for public use through the Internet but to use a Gopher, you must either have Telnet capabilities or a Gopher site must be operating on the computer where your account is located (ibid.).

No tool of the information age has increased access to previously inaccessible resources more than the Internet. According to Eisenberg and Ely (1993), "this is a time in which the ability to ask the right questions is more important than having the

*continued on page 11*

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GED Graduate Story

# Virginia Woman Attains GED Goal 33 Years After Leaving High School

by Carollyn James

People often say, "that's the way the cookie crumbles." But for 16-year-old Leona Tunstall, life wasn't "crummy" at all. Until 34 years ago, when Leona's mother was diagnosed with cancer. Leona was the eldest daughter at home.

There, in small-town South Carolina, it looked as if any growing up Leona had to do would have to be done immediately. "I had wanted to be a teacher or a secretary," Leona says. She had to leave school, set aside her "unrealistic" teenage notions and become an adult.

Leona left school, nursed her mother, tended her father, mothered her baby sister, and ran the household. She must have done well enough at it, because soon after, her older sister left her with a six-year-old nephew to raise as well.

Within a year of her mother's dying, Leona became pregnant. By the time she was 17, she had buried her mother, given birth to her first son, married a truck driver named Clarence Tunstall and moved to Rappahannock, Virginia.

In her early 20's, Leona had a job offer from the local school system. They said they'd make her a teacher's aide if she would get her GED diploma. "That was the first time I took the test," Leona remembers, "and I did just awful." She didn't get the job. She continued to raise her family while earning a practical nurse certification. "But I've never used it, you know," she says.

Her first son graduated from high school, joined the army, and years later started his own trucking company. Her second son graduated from high school and also joined the army. He studied to be an architect, and is now in graduate school, studying to become a software designer. Before any of Leona's children reached adulthood, however, Clarence Tunstall died in a trucking accident.

**Leona Tunstall earned her GED diploma in April of 1994, after undergoing a kidney transplant in 1990. Now that her children are on their own, she plans to learn computer skills that will help her get a better-paying job.**

After her husband's death, Leona moved to New York with her daughter so that they could be near her sister, her only living adult relative. "That was a hard time, I can tell you," she adds.

She found a job filing for Abraham & Strauss department stores. She was on the job one day when the goals she'd set for herself had to be put on hold again. Leona collapsed and was rushed to the hospital. Kidney failure, according to the physicians. What followed were six years of dialysis, three or four times a week, two to three hours at a time.

Leona had to give up her job if she wanted to stay alive.

In 1990, Leona's luck turned when she received a kidney transplant. It was the cost of her medication that pushed her to come back for her GED. "I've always told my children to get an education because you can't get a good job without an education."

She was thankful they had listened to her. Now, she says, it was



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*"I've always told my children to get an education because you can't get a good job without an education." ...Now it was time to take her own advice.*

time to take her own advice; "I can't afford my medications without a good job."

In April, 1994, Leona passed the GED Tests in Alexandria, Virginia. "I've always wanted my GED. It means that I've finally accomplished something I couldn't do before." She's now preparing to enter a computer training course at a local community college.

*Carollyn James is a teacher with the Alexandria City Public Schools Employment Training Program.*

*continued from page 1*

completed answer sheets and essays to Atlanta. The central computer will retrieve the data from the answer sheet directly into its memory. It will check to see if the examinee has other testing records on file, score the answer sheet, reproduce the essay onto a computer monitor for scoring (in the examinee's handwriting), and prepare score reports as well as diplomas for those who have successfully completed the five tests in the battery.

### Put Down Your Pencils, Begin

Across North America, a broad range of licensing candidates take their examinations on computer, entering their answers directly into the computer, sometimes just by touching the screen rather than the keyboard. At the end of the test, the score is computed and reported, often right away. The item bank for each licensing test may be located in a central computer hundreds of miles away from the examinee. Telecommunications systems provide a two-way, real-time link between the testing site and the item bank.

*"...this is the way business and government will run in the future." — Bob Wofford, GED Administrator, Georgia*

The delivery implications such developments hold for the GED Tests are enormous. However, about eight times more people take the GED Tests each year than take the largest licensing exam. According to GEDTS Senior Psychometrician Steve Sireci, "in addition to the content issues we're examining for GED 2000, we're looking at ways to deliver the tests on computer." As the Educational Testing Service discovered earlier this year with its first attempts to administer the Graduate

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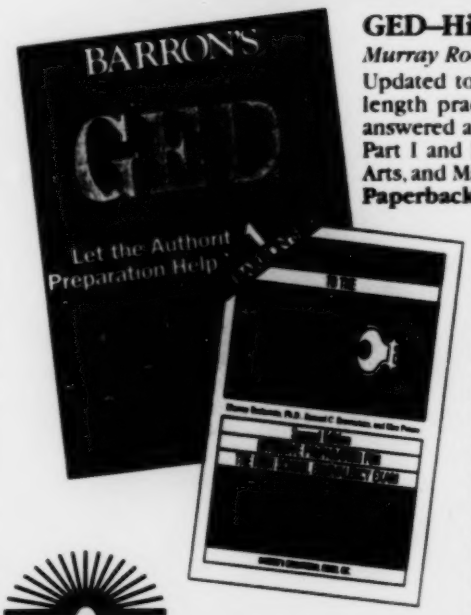


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# Merging EDP with the One-Stop Career Centers

by Florence Harvey and Katherine Lowndes

One of the changes in vocational and adult education that may soon become a reality is a system of One-Stop Career Centers. These centers, proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor, and currently funded as pilots in three states, would provide assessment and information resources. The key ingredient in this design is a labor market information system. The inclusion of adult education is as an additional program, not a core one.

The states of Ohio, Indiana, and Minnesota have received a total of $15.5 million to create One-Stop Career Centers from existing assessment centers that already offer services based on a one-stop model.

By offering counseling, job search assistance and referrals to education and training services, these centers would provide access points for underemployed and unemployed adults.

## Enhancing The One-Stop Model

To make the one-stop center truly "one-stop," one of the employability factors the center staff would assess would be the adult's educational skills compared with those needed for a desired job. Adults without a high school diploma should be able to learn of the available educational options during the one-stop visit.

When an adult enters a one-stop center, basic skill assessments and the Official GED Practice Test could be included in the assessments given on site. The diagnostic test portion of the External Diploma Program (EDP) would fit nicely into the one-stop centers.

## How the External Diploma Program Fits

Already a brokering model that refers adults to existing community instructional resources, EDP administers a math, a reading, and a writing basic skill diagnostic test as the first step in earning a diploma. Each EDP candidate also must have a vocational skill, so career diagnostic instruments are administered, too. When needed, referrals to training programs are part of the EDP process.

*Adults without a high school diploma should be able to learn of the available educational options during the one-stop visit.*

EDP provides each prospective candidate with a printed specific skill learning recommendation that defines the areas in which she or he must improve skills. Because EDP assesses competencies in a real-life context, the instructional referrals can be family or workplace learning programs as well as ABE centers. When the learning is completed, the adult returns to the assessment center for retesting on the specific competencies that she or he missed the first time.

Retesting offers an advantage because it keeps the adult student engaged with the career center during training and learning, allowing the counselor to track the client and to collect accurate pre- and post-test data on successful learning experiences. Once the adult successfully completed the diagnostic phase, the one-stop center counselor could link the adult with a local EDP program or perform an EDP assessment if trained to do so.

The high school level EDP assessment involves private appointments similar to those used by the one-stop assessor. Therefore, with EDP training, the existing center staff could fit EDP assessments easily into their daily schedules.

Successful documentation and demonstration of EDP's 65 competencies and a vocational skill gives the EDP graduate a traditional high school diploma and increased employability.

## The Education and Training Link

Twelve states currently offer the EDP: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Dakota, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

The one-stop assessment center concept may be in place now at your work site program or through your community or technical college delivery system.

If you are involved in any version of a one-stop model in your community and want more information about linking EDP with your center, contact the External Diploma Program at (202) 939-9475.

*Florence Harvey is Director and Katherine Lowndes is Assistant Director of the External Diploma Program.*

## House Passes Literacy Program Cuts

The House of Representatives has passed approximately $17.5 billion in budget cuts for the 1995 fiscal year. The recission bill, which made it through the House on March 16, eliminates remaining 1995 funding for workplace literacy partnerships ($18.7 million), state literacy resource centers ($7.8 million), literacy programs for prisoners and homeless Americans ($5.1 and $9.5 million respectively), and library literacy programs ($8 million).

A late-breaking floor amendment restored funding to the National Institute for Literacy and Tech-Prep programs, which had seen all FY95 funding terminated in the recission bill that left the House Appropriations Committee a week earlier. Other literacy-related programs such as JTPA, bilingual programs and AmeriCorps face possible pull-backs in promised funding as well.

Part of a broad-reaching domestic spending cuts package put together in late February, the proposal now goes to the Senate before reaching President Clinton's desk. Observers say that, given the changing dynamics on Capitol Hill, it is unclear what the bill will look like in its final form. The Senate was scheduled to mark up their version of the recission bill during the week of March 20.

## Democrats Top Ed Spending Honor Roll

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) released its honor roll of top congressional education spenders for the 103rd Congress, which closed with the end of 1994. Senators who ranked most school-friendly in the Senate: Bumpers and Pryor (AR), Boxer (CA), Dodd (CT), Harkin (IA), Mitchell (ME), Mikulski and Sarbanes (MD), Kennedy (MA), Levin and Riegle (MI), Wellstone (MN), Reid (NV), Moynihan (NY), Metzenbaum (OH), Pell (RI), Matthews (TN), Leahy (VT), Murray (WA), Byrd and Rockefeller (WV). All are Democrats. Member groups of CEF include the American Library Association, the International Reading Association, America's Public Television Stations, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the American Council on Education.

For the complete CEF Education Honor Roll, which also lists House members, and a list of Congressional voting records on education bills, ✉ CEF, 505 Capitol Court, NE, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20002 ☎ (202) 543-6300.

### Contacting your Senator or Representative

**Letters to members of Congress should be addressed in the following format:**

**The Honorable Steve Smith**
**U.S. House of Representatives**
**Washington, DC 20515**

**The Honorable Betty Brown**
**United States Senate**
**Washington, DC 20510**

**U.S. Capitol Switchboard**
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# The Lure of Easy Money

***A Tennessee teacher inspires her ABE class to think, write, and cooperate...with resources from the local newsstand***

by Kay Ann Sparks-Smith

If you agree that adult learners benefit from a reading class based upon the language experience approach, then I have a set of lesson plans worth the investment!

With a minimum of resources, the adult basic education instructor can offer students a new way to use their reading, writing and communication skills while working with their peers. The payoff will be increased skills and, maybe, a few bucks to boot!

## The Hook

Do you have bright ideas? Do you do something that makes life easier for you? Would you be willing to share these ideas with thousands of others if someone paid you twenty-five dollars to do it?

Several magazines will pay for nifty ideas, neighborly projects, parenting tips, organizing hints, et cetera. I sometimes send in my own ideas to various magazines and I've reaped several small checks in the mail.

I decided that my students would get just as excited about the possibility of a check in the mail. I began to think of the many ways that the lure of easy money would pay off toward individual student goals in the areas of reading, writing, expression, thinking skills, and even math! This was truly an enticing project!

As I had hoped, once I introduced the idea, my students were anxious to run the 32 cent risk and share their ideas with the populace. We really had fun with this project and we continue to set aside a group writing time whenever a student announces, "I thought of an idea."

The following is a step-by-step description of how I carried out this project with my Level I ABE students.

## The Set Up

Introducing the project was easy. I asked my students approximately two weeks in advance of the final lesson to think of the small things they do every day, but that they do in some unique or different way. Did they have a cooking tip or a cleaning hint? A way of doing something that made life easier?

I didn't tell them why I brought pages torn from magazines into class. The pages were from magazines that offered to pay for ideas and hints. I selected ideas that matched different students' reading and vocabulary or interests. Then I circled with red marker a tip that had been sent in and published.

Each student was asked to read aloud the article circled. For example, one student, a construction worker, read a hint about wetting the tip of a nail before pounding it into a dry wall. When he commented, "Duh," I asked him to read the other box that I had circled at the bottom of the page. There he discovered that the author of the hint had literally "hit the nail on the head" with a one hundred dollar payment from *Family Circle*® magazine!

Around the room we went. My students read tip after tip from ordinary people who were sharing their ideas and were reaping the payoff. We read from *Women's World*®, *Family Circle*®, *Healthy Kids*®, *Family Fun*®, and several other magazines.

Once you begin looking for these columns in magazines, you will find many examples. You'll find good results if you check out women's, parenting, cooking, sporting and other specialty magazines. Most require a two or three sentence description of the hint. A box included somewhere on the page will give the details of how to send in the hint.

Next we made a list, on a large sheet of paper, of each of the magazines that offered to pay for our hints. We listed the price paid and a brief description of what sort of hints the editors seemed to like.

At this point, I felt strongly that we needed to discuss the possibility of rejection. I asked my students if it were a sure bet that they would get published and paid. I did not want them to think this was money in the bank. Collectively we agreed that all that was at risk was a stamp or even just a postcard.

*I began to think of the many ways that the lure of easy money would pay off toward individual student goals in the areas of reading, writing, expression, thinking skills, and even math! This was truly an enticing project!*

## The Plan

Many students were eager to share their ideas. Each member of



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the class got an opportunity to describe his or her great idea. Some of the ideas were wonderful!

*I selected ideas that matched different students' reading and vocabulary or interests. Then I circled with red marker a tip that had been sent in and published.*

In describing them, we broke the ideas down into two parts. In Part One we stated the problem. In Part Two we laid out the solution.

As a class we selected an idea to target first. One creative mother found a way to make her little girl's tights last longer by painting runs with like-color nail polish. This idea seemed to easily fit into our two-part pattern.

On the board I wrote: "Part 1: Problem" and "Part 2: Solution."

Together we filled in the blanks: "My little girl's tights seem to run as soon as she puts them on." "I make them last longer by painting the run before it gets too big with nail polish that matches the tights in color. Using the matching color nail polish really covers up the run!"

The class helped to refine the wording, spelling, grammar and punctuation of the letter. The simple statement formula soon had everybody buzzing with ideas.

### The Send-Off

We had the most fun selecting the magazine that would receive our tip. As we consulted the long list we'd compiled of all our possible recipients, a lengthy debate began to develop. Most men in the class believed the tip should go to the highest-paying magazine. The women, on the whole, thought the tip need to match the market. In the end, the women won the argument and we voted to send the tip I've described above to a women's magazine that pays twenty-five dollars for each idea published.

Once that was decided, we read that the tip needed to be sent in on a postcard. This was great because we had just completed a lesson using postcards to write to a state for tourist information.

Each student whose idea had been selected to send to a magazine copied the idea from the board, included his or her address and other information as requested by the magazine, addressed the card and sent it off.

*We had the most fun selecting the magazine that would receive our tip. As we consulted the long list we'd compiled of all our possible recipients, a lengthy debate began to develop.*

### The Sting

We are still waiting to see which ideas have been accepted. It is exciting to have something to expect from the letter carrier. And wouldn't it be reinforcing if the lesson paid off in more ways than one! In the meantime, however, we've all learned about the power of problem-solving ideas, words, teamwork, and the other ways writing can pay off. Best of all, everyone has agreed, if we get any money, we'll order up pizzas for the class!

*Kay Ann Sparks-Smith is an Adult Basic Education instructor living in Kingsport, TN.*

# *ABE, ESL Students Enjoy Simple Poetry Technique*

Kathy Yearick, an adult educator in Wilmington, Delaware reports that she has found fun and success with a "system" for poetry writing. The idea, she says, is "simple and stresses basic English skills" and she finds it effective for ABE and ESL classes.

Kathy asked her students to write a poem by following a formula: Line 1 had to be a noun; Line 2, two adjectives; Line 3, three verb forms; Line 4, two short statements, questions, etc. Below is a sample of her students' work:

**Birthday**
Bigger, older
Growing, changing, thinking
Wrinkles are coming. Sad!

—Weiling Deng, China

**Moon**
Dark, amazing
Changing, thinking, reminding
Full moon makes me think.
Family far away.

—Tie Fang, Japan

*Portions of this story were reprinted with permission from Synergy, Delaware's adult education community newsletter (Winter 1995).*

**Submit to Items!**

**Do you have an idea or lesson to share? GED*Items* wants to print articles written by you, our readers!**

**For more about how to submit your article, refer to page 13, column 3!**

# Test Security Depends on Awareness and Continuing Training

Can you answer the following questions without consulting your *Examiner's Manual*?

1. Secure test materials must be inventoried
   a. immediately upon arrival from GEDTS
   b. before and after each testing session
   c. every month
   d. a, b, and c
   e. a and b

2. Which of these statements is correct?
   a. Test forms are rotated yearly.
   b. One testing center may loan secure materials to another center.
   c. Testing centers may destroy damaged test booklets.
   d. Examiners and proctors may copy test booklets.
   e. None of the above

3. A test is considered compromised if
   a. a package containing test booklets is lost or tampered with
   b. a package containing answer keys is opened in the mail room
   c. a page or pages are lost from a booklet
   d. a test battery is not accounted for at the end of the contract year
   e. all of the above

(Correct answers at end of story)

The answers to these questions may seem elementary to you. In fact, we hope that they do! Test security is perhaps the most vital factor Examiners can control in maintaining the GED Tests as a "measure of excellence." We can create the finest measurement of high school-level ability, but it means nothing if the answers to the questions are widely available.

Each year when you receive your order, serial-numbered batteries and keys are issued to your center alone. These materials are checked back in by serial number at the end of the contract year.

By following inventory procedures, you will gain a sense of control over the test materials. For instance, suppose that the inventory prior to a test session indicated no irregularities but in the inventory immediately after the session, you find a page missing from a test booklet. The procedure has just made it possible for you to track the source of the compromise immediately.

Maintaining a test log (see Appendix 15a of the 1993 *Examiner's Manual*) will give you a record of which examinees have used which booklet and when. Also remember that checking for missing pages by using the fan method is well worth the extra time it takes. Fan out the pages of the booklet and look for the black blocks along the outside margins—a missing block indicates a missing page.

A variety of materials are available from the GED Fulfillment Service to provide guidance on testing center operations. The most recent video, "The GED Examiner: Test Security Depends On You"

*continued on page 14*

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*continued from page 3*

right answers" (p.6). The secret to the Internet's rapid ascent is this: by connecting networks worldwide, it provides access to databases, libraries, interpersonal resources, and other materials that can provide the right answers.

*This article was excerpted from the ERIC/ACVE Practitioner File series. For information about ERIC/ACVE and its resources, I: ericacve@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu or write ERIC/ACVE, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090.*

*Related story on page 16*

**Legend**

- ✉ mailing address
- ☎ telephone number
- *I:* internet address

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*Related story on page 16*

# Take a Bite Out of GED Math Fear

Convince every student that he or she can pass the GED Mathematics Test with The GED Institute's two VCR introductory tapes:

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## Readers' Survey

**We're working to improve GED*Items*! Help us to give you more of what you want by responding to the following survey.**

Please rate the the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is "Excellent" and 1 represents "Needs Improvement"

| | Excellent | | Fair | | Needs Improvement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall appearance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Readability | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall content | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Please rate the regular feature sections on their usefulness to you, where 5 represents "Very Useful" and 1 represents "Not Useful". Please mark 3 if you find the column somewhat useful or if you find it interesting, but not directly useful to you in your work.

| | Very Useful | | Somewhat Useful/ Interesting | | Not Useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From the Director | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Teaching Tips | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| External Diploma Program Update | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| GED Graduate Story | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| For GED Examiners | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| News and Notes | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Legislative Update | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

How important is it to you to hear news about the GED program in the following contexts?

| | Very Important | | Somewhat Important | | Not Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Research | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
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| Teaching | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Policies | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Staff Development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Disabilities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Specific Learning Disabilities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Professional Issues | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Test Development | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Employers | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| GEDTS Operations | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Please provide any additional comments:

Are you (please mark): ❍ a Teacher ❍ Testing Staff ❍ a Program Administrator ❍ Other

Return to:

**Lisa Richards**
**Editor, GED*Items***
**GED Testing Service**
**One Dupont Circle, NW**
**Washington, DC 20036-1163**

## COABE Slated for June

The Arkansas Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education hosts the Commission on Adult Basic Education 1995 National Conference June 6-9, 1995 in Little Rock.

Offerings will include pre-conference institutes and approximately 200 concurrent sessions on various topics of interest to professionals and volunteers involved in public, private, college, business and industry, and basic skills instruction for adults. ✉ 1995 COABE Conference Office, 1504 Caldwell, Conway, AR 73032 ☎ (501) 336-9930

## Philly Technology Conference Meets in August

The annual Adult Literacy Technology Conference will be held August 4 & 5 in Philadelphia. The theme of the conference this year is "Alternatives for Literacy: Technology for Today & Tomorrow." Co-sponsored by the National Center for Adult Literacy, Drexel University's Office of Computing Service, and the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Literacy, the conference will feature multiple strands, from basic how-tos to sophisticated technology solutions, to help attendees learn about what is possible, what is practical, what others are doing.

For more information contact Tom Andrzejewski or Chris Hopey ✉ NCAL, University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111. ☎ (215) 898-2100 fax (215) 898-9804 *I:* andrzejewski or hopey@literacy.upenn.edu

### Legend

| | |
|---|---|
| ✉ | mailing address |
| ☎ | telephone number |
| *I:* | internet address |

## '96 Laubach Conference Comes to Portland, OR

The Laubach Literacy Action 1996 Biennial Conference will be held June 13-16, 1996 in Portland, Oregon. The Pre-conference dates are June 12-13. ✉ Janet Hiemstra, Director of Conferences, Laubach Literacy Action, 13210 Jamesville Avenue, Box 131, Syracuse, NY 1321 ☎ (315) 422-9121 Ext. 283.

## Popcorn Magnate Backs Lifelong Learning

The makers of Orville Redenbacher popcorn are offering $1,000 scholarships again this year to 25 students aged 30 and over who wish to pursue a college education.

The Second Start Scholarship Program is especially intended for adults "who are making dramatic 'second starts' in their lives."

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Applicants must submit a 500-word essay, demonstrate financial need, and enroll in full- or part-time studies leading to an associate, bachelor's or advanced degree. ✉ Self-addressed stamped envelope to Orville Redenbacher's Second Start Scholarship Program, P.O. Box 39101, Chicago, IL 60639.

## Volunteer Network Fights Censorship

The Intellectual Freedom Action Network (IFAN) works to fight censorship through volunteers who attend school and library board meetings, write letters to newspaper editors, and organize resistance to censorship on a local level.

For membership and activity information ☎ Donna Reidy, Office for Intellectual Freedom (312) 280-4221

## Submit to *Items*!

GED*Items* wants to print articles written by you, our readers! Stories about people who have earned their GED diploma are welcome—as are research studies, teaching tips, stories about workplace preparation programs, and other GED-related issues. We will make every effort to feature appropriate articles contributed from the field whenever space permits.

Articles should be approximately 700 words (2-3 pages of typed, double-spaced copy) and accompanied by a clear photograph or diagrams. *Items* requires written permission from the author(s) and from the subject(s) of the article or photo prior to publication.

Send your article to Lisa Richards, Editor, GED*Items*, ✉ One Dupont Circle, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20036-1163 ☎ (202) 939-9490

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*continued from page 10*

comes with a set of inservice activities Examiners can use to train new staff or as part of a refresher course. The inservice activities are free of charge when ordered separately. In addition, Section 10 of the 1993 *GED Examiner's Manual* contains quizzes and other awareness-building activities.

*For more information, consult Sections 4.3-3 - 4.3-7 and 10 of the 1993 GED Examiner's Manual.*

Correct answers:
1. (d), 2. (a), 3. (e).

*continued from page 5*

Record Exam (GRE) on computer, there can be security risks to delivering the tests on computer. "As we work to develop the next generation of tests," says Sireci, "these will be issues to explore."

It's unlikely that a computer edition of the tests will completely replace the printed tests within five years. However, examinees who use computers at work or home, or in the adult learning experience may be the candidates most comfortable with such a test format.

### A Mouse's Life for Me

The rapidly expanding use of information exchange tools such as the Internet and other computer-based resources portend extensive changes in the ways we communicate as well as in how we learn.

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Information of all sorts—from the trivial to the profound—is available by computer. Such resources can provide support and stimulation to teachers, to learners, and to their children. Want to know what made Letterman's Top Ten List last night? No need to stay awake or set the VCR. It's available on computer.

And so is Stephen Hawking's most recent paper on the nature of the universe.


## Boost Visibility with GED Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

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- ❒ **Audio tape featuring: Anne Murray, Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Waylon Jennings, Bill Cosby, and Vikki Carr. ($5.00) (item no. 251009)**
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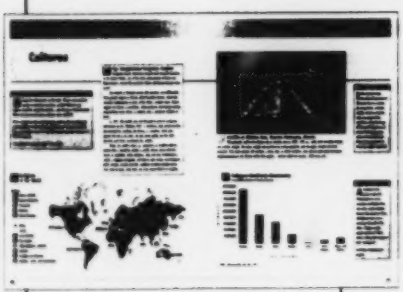

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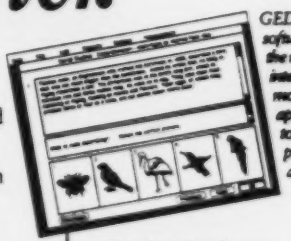

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*This article was excerpted from the ERIC/ACVE Practitioner File series. For information about ERIC/ACVE and its resources, I: ericacve@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu or ✉ ERIC/ACVE, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090.*

## Example

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# GED Grad is Navy's Top Man

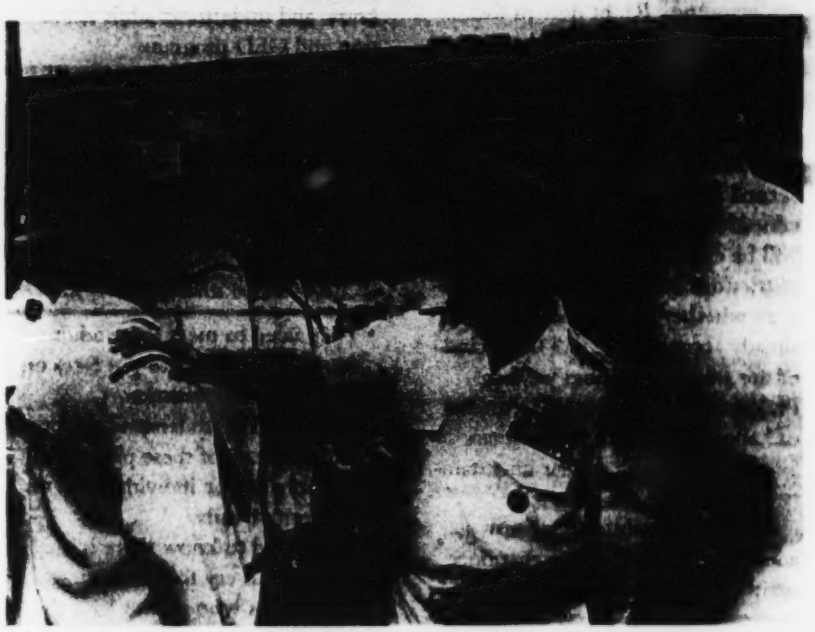
***Admiral Mike Boorda will accept GEDTS' Award of Special Recognition at the 1995 annual GED Administrators' Conference in Washington, DC.***

Often called the "Sailor's Admiral," Admiral Mike Boorda is the first enlisted person to earn the Navy's top leadership position. In April 1994, he was named Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). As CNO, he is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and responsible for 479,000 active-duty sailors and another half a million reservists.

At a time when debate over role and budget seems to be the only consistent feature of the Department of Defense, Admiral Boorda has been lauded as an innovative, dynamic leader who has the skills and vision to chart the Navy's course into the next century.

*"People who get nontraditional starts are not good or bad; they just need a chance to get on the track to success."*
*—Adm. Mike Boorda*

Born in South Bend, Indiana, Admiral Boorda grew up 50 miles outside Chicago. Like many other GED graduates, Mike Boorda did well in school. He participated in football, baseball, and track. When football season ended in the fall of his junior year, he left. He was 16. "I needed to get a job," he says. "So I did."



**Admiral Mike Boorda, Chief of Naval Operations (center), talks with crew members of the USS Kalamazoo while visiting Norfolk, Va., in May 1994.**

About a week later, he enlisted in the Navy. It was in the months following boot camp that Admiral Boorda started brushing up for the GED Tests. He earned his GED Diploma in the year following his enlistment. After rising to petty officer first class, Admiral Boorda applied to become a commissioned officer under the Integration Program, which was later discontinued. He earned his commission in 1962 and began serving in a series of increasingly important positions in surface warfare as well as personnel and training. He subsequently attended the U.S. Naval War College and earned a B.A. from the University of Rhode Island in 1971.

In November 1991, Admiral Boorda received his fourth star and

*continued on page 2*

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## From the Director

# Responding to Crises in an Uncertain World

by Jean Lowe

Last week when I was involved in an automobile accident, I was reminded about the fragility of life and the uncertainties that we mostly ignore in our day-to-day planning. Right now in the United States, we are facing a slew of uncertainties with the changes in education policy and funding proposed by the new Congress.

On our short list, we're concerned about the amount of adult education money, how the money will be channeled to the states, restrictions on the use of funds, and even whether adult education funds already appropriated will be rescinded are among the issues we face. Programs through the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services are facing similar uncertainty.

What does this mean for us as adult educators? It means that once again we have to react quickly to save the programs we work and believe in.

It means that now more than ever, we have to be sure that our Congressional representatives really know and understand adult education and GED programs.

*What does this mean for us as adult educators? It means that once again we have to react quickly to save the programs we work and believe in.*

- They need to meet some adult education students to put faces on the stories and statistics.
- They need to understand the profound impact of these programs not only on the individual but on the entire family.
- They need to know there is a tremendous cry for instruction from adults who do not have the academic or employability skills required for self-sustaining employment.
- And finally, they need to know that people who complete our programs and graduate have doors opened to them that were previously closed.

There is a saying that "all politics is local." This means that YOU must inform your senators and representatives as well as your state-level representatives about the value of the work YOU do. I know it's been a year of these alerts and in every case, you have responded magnificently. What I don't know is how long we'll have to continue defending our outstanding contributions to the foundations of our society. Life is indeed uncertain, but our mission is not.

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*Navy's Top Man from page 1*

subsequently became Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe and Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe. As the Allied boss, Admiral Boorda commanded all NATO troops enforcing United Nations sanctions against the warring factions in what had been Yugoslavia.

While serving as Commander in Chief, Admiral Boorda also took charge of humanitarian relief missions to Bosnia-Herzegovina and was responsible for troops working under the United Nations in the Balkans.

After taking charge of the Navy in 1994, one of Admiral Boorda's first moves as CNO was to reinstate the program by which enlisted people could become commissioned officers.

"I did it within the hour. I had it planned," he says. "People who get nontraditional starts are not good or bad; they just need a chance to get on the track to success."

Additional changes Admiral Boorda has instituted that will affect sailors include revamping the performance evaluation system, reworking the way battle groups and squadrons coordinate activities at sea and in port, ensuring that sailors get the time at home they're entitled to, and upgrading living quarters.

The GED Testing Service is proud to recognize Admiral Boorda not only for his management style, which is transforming the lives of Navy men and women, but for his personal involvement with the communities where he has been stationed. His story illustrates that ability, hard work, and caring for other people are still the tools with which one builds a successful and rewarding life.

*Admiral Boorda will accept his award at the GED Administrators' Conference, Thursday, July 13.*



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# GED Testing Center in Texas Hills Stretches Service

by Margie Kovar

If the student can't come to the test, take the test to the student. That's the philosophy for Blinn College's GED Testing Center in Bryan, Texas, and it's one that has shown an increase in the number of students taking the tests, says Dwight Nittsche, Blinn College's Chief Examiner.

Blinn's main testing site is at the college's Occupational Education Center, with many adults who haven't finished high school trekking from other towns located near Austin and San Antonio.

*"The students are more comfortable in familiar surroundings. They're more relaxed."*

The use of Blinn's testing services has more than tripled since Nittsche expanded testing sites, made registration more convenient, and scheduled weekend testing appointments. Additional testing sites were established by contract addendum at Bryan Independent School District's Carver Adult Learning Center and at the local federal prison camp. The number of adults taking the tests has increased from 20 examinees to as many as 85 each month.

Besides spreading testing opportunities out into the community, Nittsche says he thinks making it easier to register has been a factor, too. "Before, a student had to come to the Occupational Education Center here on campus and register in person. That was a drawback for a lot of people who had to rely on public transportation to get here. For someone coming from the Carver School area, that meant a three hour trip." He not only trained staff at the Carver School to register candidates, but also in three other nearby school districts. The registration forms now come in the mail as well as by hand.

"The on-site testing here at Carver has made a difference in the number of students," says Mike Roth, director of the Carver Adult Learning Center. "We've seen better results as well. The students are more comfortable in familiar surroundings. They're more relaxed."

At the University of Texas in Austin's GED Scoring Center, Molly Hocking says tailoring the program to meet examinees' needs has meant success. "Dwight has seen the importance of going out into the community, discovering the needs and serving those needs," says Hocking, who is the scoring site's Director and Chief Reader. "He has a very gregarious personality and what he's done seems to be what the community needed."

For information on developing an outreach strategy for your testing center and community, refer to Section 11 of the *GED Examiner's Manual*.

*Margie Kovar is the Director of Public Information at Blinn College in Brenham, Texas.*

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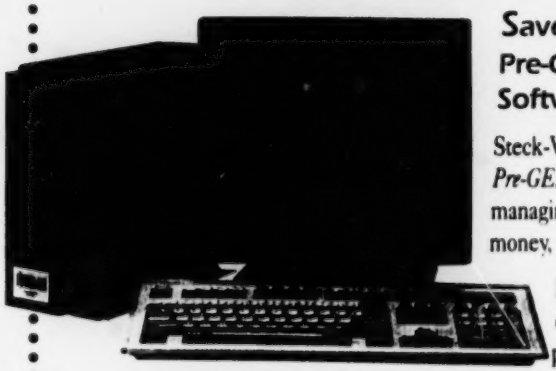

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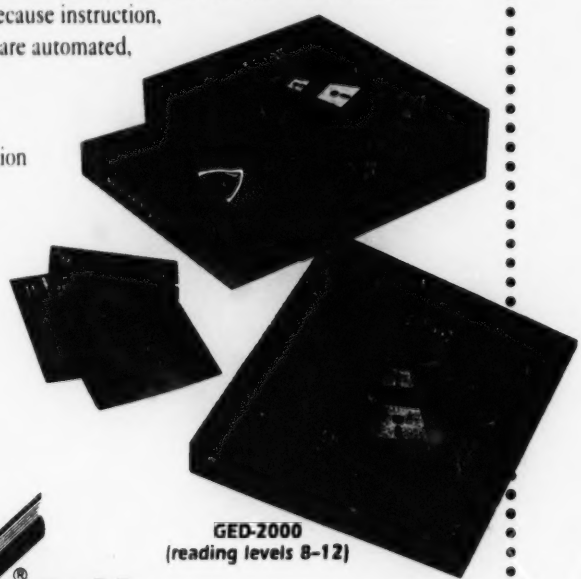

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# Delivering the EDP as a Contracted Service

by Katherine Lowndes

The American Council on Education's External Diploma Program (EDP) encourages local sites to partner with business and industry, unions, family literacy providers, one-stop career centers, and employment training providers to increase the local-level outreach by delivering EDP at the worksite. This outreach gives the most age-appropriate adults access to this opportunity and can help to provide a more solid funding base for local sites.

Currently, many EDP sites obtain start-up funding for training assessors through AEA 353 grants (federal moneys), seek continuation funding through AEA 321 adult secondary reimbursement, and depend on other specific state and local support.

Some, especially the newer EDP sites, use a full-cost recovery model, charging tuition directly to the client and using a foundation to allow local business and community groups like the Rotary to provide scholarships. Increasingly, such sites are bringing EDP directly to the workplace in a contracted service model.

In the EDP, a client begins the program in the diagnostic phase. Her (or his) basic skills in reading, math, and writing are assessed, and the individualized skill for which the adult wants to receive credit is determined (i.e., current job, training, and special skills such as woodcarving). This phase can be delivered at the worksite during a set time slot (e.g., two advisors evaluate all the possible applicants for 8 weeks every Wednesday).

After receiving a specific skill prescription from this diagnosis, the EDP applicant brushes up on her skills during her own time, using whatever instructional services are available at the worksite or in the community. At this point, many agencies sponsoring EDP can design and contract with the partner to deliver an instructional program that teaches the basic skills identified by EDP in a context appropriate to the worksite.

*The contracted service option extends EDP opportunities to the undereducated adult...[and] creates collaboratives for delivery of service through sharing of both costs and clientele.*

Although the instruction cannot be delivered by EDP assessors (who are not permitted to teach), a local workplace literacy provider can provide the curriculum and the teachers. Thus, the adult continues to learn basic skills in context and works toward the high school diploma.

In the assessment phase of EDP, an adult working at home and in the community demonstrates 65 competencies in five tasks that demand complex, real-life application of skill.

After practicing and learning at home, the adult's skills undergo an assessment in one-on-one appointments with EDP staff. When delivering this service under contract, a block of time over approximately 10 weeks is used to conduct these appointments (e.g., every Wednesday for 10 weeks). The staff time, number of clients, materials, and administrative costs determine the charges for these services.

The contracted service option extends EDP opportunities to the undereducated adult in the transitional and the existing workforce, and especially those who would not normally use traditional adult education services. It creates collaboratives for delivery of service through sharing of both costs and clientele.

For more information on the EDP, please contact the ACE/EDP office at (202) 939-9475.

*Katherine Lowndes is the Assistant Director of the External Diploma Program at the American Council on Education*

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# Interpreting Visual Stimuli: Maps, Charts & Graphs

by Ellen Fisher and Sam Vogel

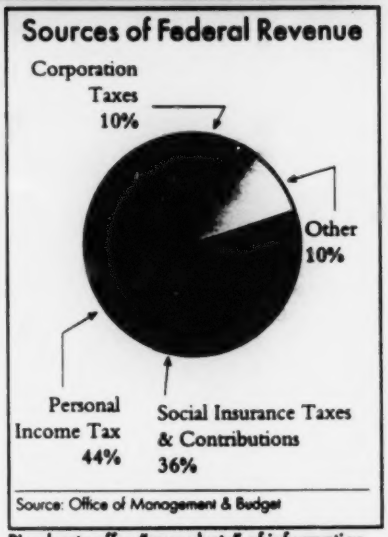
How many GED candidates left high school without a government or civics credit? When you prepare students for the Social Studies Test, you have to knock down walls of resistance to the subject! One obstacle you can help students to scale is the fortress of maps, charts, and graphs.

Questions on the Social Studies Test will require your students to read and understand various maps, charts, and graphs. Many students lack the skills and the will to interpret graphics accurately. They need to learn from you. Fortunately, maps, charts, and graphs abound in daily publications. They are extremely useful for teaching necessary skills and relating those skills to daily life.

In many GED preparation books, one of the first Social Studies areas covered is Geography. You can easily teach map skills while covering this area. Map skills may seem basic to you, but to many students the word "North" is about the Civil War. So, start with the basics. Teach students to find North on a map and then to relate it the other points on the compass. Wall maps are an obvious resource, and an investment in a geography terms map will pay back generously in an improved knowledge base for your students.

State and province road maps (often free from tourism offices) are excellent tools for teaching directions and map symbols. Old AAA (American Automobile Association) "TripTics" are another good teaching tool.

*A quick, effective way to teach percents and decimals is to relate them to our monetary system, linking the term "percent" to the number of cents in a dollar.*


Sources of Federal Revenue
Corporation Taxes 10%
Other 10%
Personal Income Tax 44%
Social Insurance Taxes & Contributions 36%
Source: Office of Management & Budget

**Pie charts offer "snapshots" of information. What can your student learn from this one?**

Use chart and graph worksheets with clear instructions. Select an assortment of charts and topics for your students to practice with and examine and interpret them with your students. "Real world" examples provide an invaluable resource. Newspapers and magazines are loaded with charts about all sorts of current issues. Put them to work in your lesson plan! By using charts and graphs from current publications,

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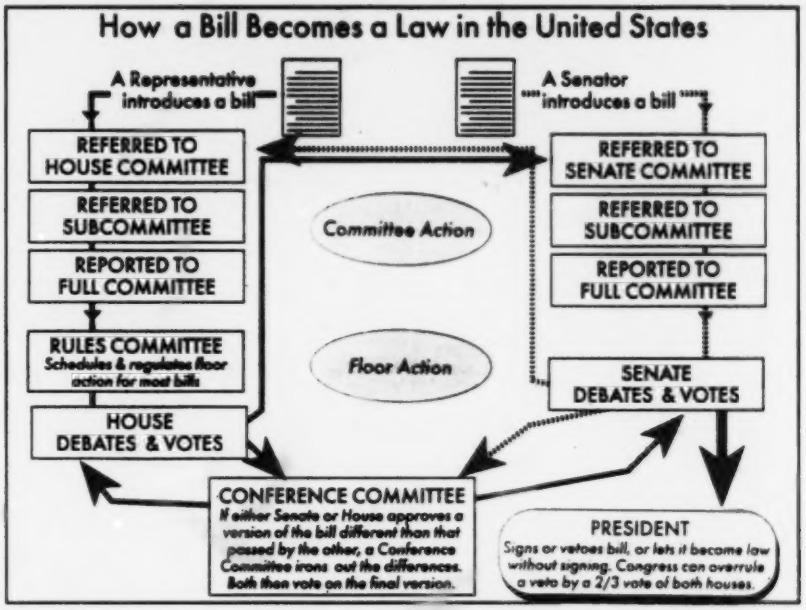
How a Bill Becomes a Law in the United States
A Representative introduces a bill
A Senator introduces a bill
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REFERRED TO SUBCOMMITTEE
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Schedules & regulates floor action for most bills
HOUSE DEBATES & VOTES
Committee Action
Floor Action
REFERRED TO SENATE COMMITTEE
REFERRED TO SUBCOMMITTEE
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SENATE DEBATES & VOTES
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
If either Senate or House approves a version of the bill different than that passed by the other, a Conference Committee irons out the differences. Both then vote on the final version.
PRESIDENT
Signs or vetoes bill, or lets it become law without signing. Congress can overrule a veto by a 2/3 vote of both houses.

**Complex flow charts can be challenging and offer insight into the intricacies of politics.**

you reinforce a connection between the lesson and the headlines and the link between a skill and its use.

One skill that students must master in order to interpret charts and graphs is an understanding of percentage and decimal figures. Be prepared to give your students a basic understanding of these math items.

A quick, effective way to teach percents and decimals is to relate them to our monetary system, linking the term "percent" to the number of cents in a dollar. All students know how to read $1.00 and how to read $ .50 or one-half dollar. Try making a chart showing how the terms are related. Students will soon catch on to the idea that anything less than a whole is a decimal or so many per "cents."

Probably the most difficult type of chart to understand is a flow chart, especially if it outlines a complex function.

"How a Bill Becomes a Law" is a flow chart to use in a lesson about how laws are made. Students in the United States need to understand the job of each government branch and how the branches interact.

Each student should have a copy of the chart to work with. The instructor should have one that the class can read from where they are sitting. An overhead projector or an enlarged photocopy will work. In a chart like this, where flow lines can originate on either side, you must carefully explain the flow lines to the students.

Eliminate one set of flow lines and explain one process first. Start with the House of Representatives, showing how a bill is introduced by one or more Members and referred to committee. Clarify that the committee does the bulk of the work on the proposed bill; it holds hearings on it and makes recommendations. You can then explain how the committee has the power to send the bill to the House for debate or to "kill" it by not reporting it out. Once the bill gets to the House floor, point out that the House debates, usually amends, and finally votes on the bill.

Once you have shown your students how a bill goes through the House, show how a similar process goes on in the Senate by adding the other set of flow lines. Ask your students whether they think the House and Senate are likely to have come up with the same version of the bill. This gives you an opportunity to explain and show how a joint conference committee reconciles the two bills into one. Finally, show that in the final steps of a bill's passage, both the House and Senate must approve the same version of the bill and send it to the President to be signed.

When your students read and understand maps, charts, and graphs, you have blasted past a wall of resistance to enjoying Social Studies. In the process, you can cover many of the major Social Studies topic areas that your students need to know to be successful on the GED Tests.

*Ellen Fisher teaches adults at Ann Arbor Adult and Community Education in Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

*Sam Vogel teaches GED preparation and other courses at SAI Boot Camp in Chelsea,*

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## UAW's GED Grads Recognized at Lorain Plant

The learning center at UAW Local 425/Lorain Assembly Plant is a busy place. The hundreds of employees and spouses participating in the Skills Enhancement Program have many different educational goals. But 117 of them have reached one goal— earning their GED diplomas. One union worker even received a $1,000 college scholarship from state of Ohio because of his excellent test scores.

According to the UAW's *Sharing Our Pride* newsletter, the Lorain school district was so impressed with these accomplishments, it presented the plant's Education, Development and Training Program (EDTP) Committee with commemorative plaques honoring the GED graduates. These plaques are now on display at the learning center, the plant cafeteria and the local union hall.

## Technology Conference Comes to Philly

The 1995 Adult Literacy and Technology Conference, *Alternatives for Literacy: Technology for Today & Tomorrow*, takes place in Philadelphia, PA, August 3-5, beginning with pre-conference sessions on Thursday, August 3. Co-sponsors are Drexel University's Office of Computing Services, the National Center on Adult Literacy (University of Pennsylvania), the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Literacy, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.

Presentations will be arranged in five strands to target a range of literacy issues and address differing levels of expertise. The strands are: Jumping into Technology, Special Populations, Staff Development, Effective Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning, and Administrative Uses and Issues.

Conference registration is $150.00 until June 19 and $175.00 after June 19. One-day registration is $100.00. Additional fees apply for pre-conference sessions. ☎ Maria Alaia (215) 895-6872.

## Arkansas GED Administrator Honored in "Top 100"

Emma E. Rhodes, Ed.D., GED Administrator for Arkansas, was recently named by *Arkansas Business* and the Writer's Project of Little Rock to a listing of the top 100 women in the state. More than 1500 nominations were received. Dr. Rhodes was one of eight finalists in the field of education.

Dr. Rhodes left school when she was 15. She returned for her GED as a 24-year-old mother of five. Five years and two more children later, she was widowed. She earned her doctorate in 1987.

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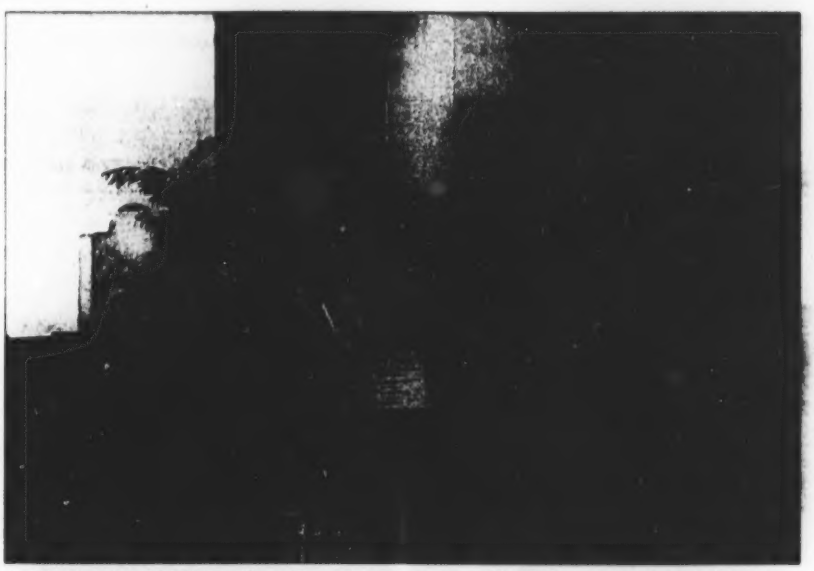
# Indiana Becomes 44th "GED Diploma" Jurisdiction

On July 1, 1995, Indiana became the 44th jurisdiction to issue diplomas to adults who pass the GED Tests. Other jurisdictions which made the change this year are the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories.

Twenty-nine other U.S. states, six Canadian provinces, and eight U.S. territories (see sidebar, page 13) use the word "diploma" in the title of their GED credential. "We are very proud of this change. It is a clear sign that Indiana has recognized the rigor and credibility of the GED Tests," says Indiana's GED Administrator, Priscilla McGuire.

The process began in January of 1994 when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Suellen Reed, appointed a GED Study Group to review Indiana's GED process and make recommendations. The twenty-four member group consisted of representatives from business, labor, higher education, secondary education, workforce literacy, GED Examiners, adult education providers, department corrections and department of education staff as well as members of the Chamber of Commerce and the State legislature. Over the following year, the group studied studied the system and formulated ideas for changing its operations.



**Dr. Suellen Reed (right), Indiana State Superintendent of Public Instruction, joins Indiana's GED Administrator, Priscilla McGuire (left), in admiring the state's new GED Diploma.**

An important initial step to ensuring that the panel's efforts would be worthwhile was orienting this diverse group to the GED culture. To fulfill this vital goal, they invited Susan Porter Robinson, Director of Outreach and Marketing, out from Washington, DC to address the group. "Susan did an excellent job of educating all the Study Group members about the GED," commented Pris McGuire. "The members all had various levels of knowledge about the GED, and Susan was able to provide substantial information to all of us."

The GED Study Group held six meetings over the year and it's important to note that the issue of a name change for the GED credential was one on which there was an early consensus. In January of 1995, the panel recommended the name of the credential be changed to "State of Indiana General Educational Development (GED) Diploma."

The recommendation was carried forth in legislation in the spring of 1995.

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# What Makes the GED Diploma Equivalent?

by Jean Lowe

At GEDTS we are often asked why people call the GED diploma a "high school equivalency." This is not a name we chose, but we *can* explain the basis for equivalency.

First, the GED Tests are designed to measure, as nearly as possible, the major and lasting skills and concepts associated with four years of regular high school instruction. The five subject areas include Writing Skills, Social Studies, Science, Interpreting Literature and the Arts, and Mathematics, the core subjects common to all high school courses of instruction.

The content of the GED battery corresponds to the general framework of most high school curricula. However, the tests are intended not to penalize candidates who lack recent academic or classroom experience or those who have acquired their education in an informal manner. The context of the test items is therefore relevant to adult experiences.

Most of the test questions require the examinee to demonstrate an understanding of concepts and generalizations and the ability to apply information, as well as to evaluate, analyze, draw conclusions, solve problems, and express ideas in writing.

Each of the five tests in the GED battery is developed from specifications established by experienced secondary school and adult educators and is reviewed by high school teachers and curriculum specialists as well as by subject matter experts. The current tests were developed by the GED Testing Service using guidelines concerning the appropriateness of the content as it relates to the intended population and the intended level of difficulty. Each test question is subjected to multiple reviews by test specialists and external content specialists and is pretested in the GED test-taking population before it becomes part of a final test form.

Second, the test scores on the GED Tests are derived by administering the tests to a national stratified random sample of graduating high school seniors during the second half of the school year. These seniors establish the performance standard required for examinees to earn a high school diploma. Through this standardization process, the passing scores required of examinees are set so that they can be compared to the demonstrated performance of graduating seniors (see table below left).

If you would like to know more about the standardization process or what the GED test scores mean, please write to or call the GED Testing Service at (202) 939-9490.

## GED Average Standard Scores and Selected U.S. High School Senior Class Rank Equivalencies

| National Class Rank[1] | Total Score of Five GED Tests[2] | GED Average Standard Score[3] |
|---|---|---|
| Top 1% | 344 | 68.8 |
| Top 2% | 334 | 66.8 |
| Top 3% | 329 | 65.8 |
| Top 5% | 323 | 64.6 |
| Top 10% | 310 | 62.0 |
| Top 15% | 301 | 60.2 |
| Top 20% | 291 | 58.2 |
| Top 25% | 285 | 57.0 |
| Top third | 270 | 54.0 |
| Top 40% | 264 | 52.8 |
| Top half | 251 | 50.2 |
| Top two-thirds | 231 | 46.2 |
| Top 70% | 226 | 45.2 |

[1] Indicates the percentile rank score associated with the nationally-representative sample of U.S. graduating high school seniors who took all five GED Tests during the 1987 GED Norming study.

[2] Indicates the sum of the standard scores across the five GED subject area tests.

[3] Indicates the average GED standard score across the five subject area tests (i.e., summed score divided by 5).

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# Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials Raises Minimum Score Requirements for Passing GED Tests

***On September 27, the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials, which sets the standards for the American Council on Education's adult education programs, passed a resolution raising the minimum score requirements for passing the GED Tests. The decision follows a unanimous vote by the GED Advisory Committee in August and a majority vote by the GED Administrators at their annual conference in July.***

As of January 1, 1997, the passing score standard for the GED Tests will be a minimum standard score of 40 on each test *and* an average standard score of 45 for each test in the battery. This standard is met by 66% of graduating high school seniors. The majority of U.S. jurisdictions use a standard met by 70% of graduating seniors. Most Canadian provinces set a standard met by 66% of their norm group. The standard now in effect, a minimum of 40 *or* an average of 45, is met by 75% of graduating seniors.

The GED score scale ranges from a low of 20 to a high of 80. By design, fifty percent of graduating high school seniors earn an average standard score of 50 or better.

GED Testing Service staff recommended the change after analyzing information from the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) and a GED-NALS Comparison Study, conducted in cooperation with the Educational Testing Service, as well as research comparing the course-taking patterns and grades of high school seniors with different GED scores.

Analysts also took into account the recent achievement of high school students since the 1983 publication of the landmark report, *A Nation At Risk*. Additionally, analyses show that Writing Skills and Mathematics Tests are the content areas in which candidates most frequently score below 40.

Because writing and math skills are increasingly important in both the workplace and higher education, a minimum score of 40 on each test imposes a more rigorous standard.

Each province, state, or territory may establish its own minimum requirement, as long as it meets or exceeds the new 40 and 45 minimum standard.

*The new passing score for the GED Tests will be a minimum standard score of 40 on each test and an average standard score of 45, a standard met by 66% of graduating U.S. high school seniors.*

For information about the minimum standards currently in effect for each jurisdiction and the percentages of graduating seniors meeting the standards, please refer to page 10.

# New Brunswick Community College Valedictorian...Also A GED Graduate!

by Lynn Pierpoint Mallet

Just over a year ago, GED graduate June Connell not only walked across the stage at the graduation ceremonies at the New Brunswick Community College in Saint John, but she also represented the graduating class that day as Valedictorian!

June left school in October of 1973, her twelfth year of school, to get married and start a family.

"When my children were small, I felt it was important that I stay home with them. I had planned to continue my education when they got older but there never seemed to be a good time to do so. Finally, I decided that if I was going to continue my education, I had to stop waiting for the 'right time' and do it."

An aptitude and interest test showed June that she had the ability to do a wide variety of jobs and that her primary interest was in the science field. Now came the important question...where to start?

*"Finally, I decided that if I was going to continue my education, I had to stop waiting for the 'right time' and do it."*

"I learned about the GED Tests and they sounded like a good place to resume my education, so in March of 1990, I arranged to write the Tests in early summer. I borrowed some books from the library and studied for two hours every morning after the children had gone to school."

**GED graduate June Connell proudly displays her GED Testing Service Award for the highest test scores earned in New Brunswick during 1994.**

By then, June had been out of the school system for 17 years, so it was understandable that she was apprehensive about taking the tests and not very confident of her ability to pass. But pass she did, with the highest marks that year for all of New Brunswick. Those marks earned her the GED International Award of Achievement. The minimum passing score in New Brunswick is a average standard score on each of the five tests.

Shortly after earning her GED Certificate, June was accepted to the Pre-technology program at the New Brunswick Community College in Saint John.

Upon successful completion of the Pre-technology program, she continued her studies in 1991 in the college's Chemical Technology Program. "I used my GED Certificate as the key (to admittance) and just before graduating from the Chemical Technology Program, I was asked to be one of two people to give the valedictory address at the graduation ceremonies. I don't think that my feet touched the floor for at least two days afterwards."

Since graduation this past spring, June has been working for the Investigations and Enforcement Branch of the New Brunswick Department of Environment in Saint John. She is an Air Quality Technician and Environmental Inspector. "Had I not written the GED Tests and obtained my Grade 12 Equivalency, none of these things would have been possible!"

*Lynn Pierpoint Mallett is a Special Projects Officer in the Curriculum and Evaluation Branch of New Brunswick's Department of Advanced Education and Labour.*

**Did you know?**
**One in 20 college freshmen is a GED graduate!**



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# Experience, Hunches Prove No Substitute for Established Procedures

***The story you are about to read is true; only the names have been changed...***

**March 12, 4:17 pm, Anyschool GED Testing Center:** Two examinees, Carol Petty and Javier Rubio, approach the Examiner's desk. She asks a question; he returns a test battery.

**March 12, 7:30 pm, Anyschool GED Testing Center:** Jane Brown, an Alternate Chief Examiner for the past 15 years, is conducting her post-test inventory when she sees that a test booklet is missing. She repeats the inventory several times, searches the classroom and the rest of the center, but still finds no test. "That's it," she thinks, "it must have been that Job Corps girl who stole it! I wish I knew the serial number of Javier's test booklet."

**March 13, 2:30 pm, 234 Crane Road:** Carol denies taking the missing booklet. Ms. Brown and Carol's mom search Carol's bedroom. They find nothing.

**March 15, 9:30:** Anyschool Chief Examiner Jack French telephones the GED Administrator and the GED Testing Service to report the loss. He follows up with a written report. In it Ms. Brown states she remains convinced that Carol stole the test. However, she cannot document her hunch.

*As an experienced, well-regarded Examiner, Ms. Brown fit the profile of an Examiner most likely to face a test compromise.*

**April 4, 3:51 pm:** A third examinee, Antonio Wilson, tells GEDTS that Ms. Brown left the room during the testing session. GEDTS staff calls Ms. Brown, who says she "only went next door to stop the noise" that was bothering her examinees. That detail wasn't in the report, she says, because she was certain nothing happened in her absence. The two rooms are joined by a glass window.

**What happened?** By signing the test security memorandum, Jane Brown agreed to uphold the testing center's contractual obligation to follow GEDTS security procedures. However, her own and her Chief Examiner's handling of this compromise violated several of these procedures:

*(1) An Examiner should never let a candidate approach the Examiner's desk.*
The candidate should raise her/his hand and the examiner should go to the candidate's desk. This practice keeps the Examiner in "the driver's seat" and restricts access to secure test materials. It reduces confusion while booklets are collected and distributed. Finally, it cuts off the chance for one examinee to appropriate another's booklet.

*(2) The Chief or Alternate Chief Examiner must notify the GED Administrator and GEDTS immediately of a test loss.*
By delaying the phone call, the Examiner allows other centers to continue using the compromised test form. The moment an Examiner thinks something is wrong, s/he should pick up the phone. If it turns out that the alert was not needed, the center can then resume normal operations.

*continued on page 12*


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# White House Staff Sits for GED Tests

by Sallie McDonald

There is a group of employees who are essential to the smooth operation of the White House...but you have probably never read their names in the Washington *Post*.

They are the dedicated people of the General Services Administration (GSA) who are charged with cleaning rooms, painting the long corridors, waxing the floors, caring for the beautiful furnishings and generally making sure that the White House is a place of which we can all be proud.

These are hard working people; some of them have never had the chance to finish their high school requirements. In November 1994, the GSA began a GED program to help these important employees improve their skills and earn a high school diploma. Since then, the students have attended classes twice a week to improve their math, English, science, and literature skills. The instructors were other GSA employees who volunteered to tutor.

For months, the GSA students studied at home, studied together, and got the support of their friends, families, and colleagues.

The group's efforts came to the attention of the District of Columbia's Vocational Education Branch and on August 18th, Alexander Hyman, GED Administrator for the District of Columbia, came to the White House Conference Center to administer the GED Tests to eight employees.

Mr. Hyman, retiring after 20 years of service with the District's GED testing program, gave the tests during his final week of work.

At a time when there is increasing criticism of the government, its size, and its employees, it's important to remember that beneath the bureaucracy, there are real people who are charged with serving the public. Like workers everywhere, government employees want to improve themselves and are willing to volunteer to help each other.

*Sallie McDonald is the Director of Marketing for the General Services Administration's National Capital Region.*


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# Future of Testing for In-School, At-Risk Youth Now on Hold

The GED Advisory Committee voted in August 1995 that the GED Testing Service should delay a decision about the future of at-risk testing of in-school, at-risk youth in the United States. That decision was upheld in September by ACE's Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials.

Last year, the Commission asked the GED Testing Service to formulate a plan to end testing for at-risk youth because the programs are inconsistent with the GED Tests' mission and purpose—to provide adults who did not finish high school with a chance to prove they possess high school-level academic skills.

At this summer's Annual Conference, the majority of GED Administrators expressed opposition toward ending experimental at-risk programs in schools.

As a result of the decisions reached in August and September, states that currently adhere to the program guidelines as established by the Commission in 1988 may continue to test at-risk in-school students. The program guidelines establish criteria for the educational programs in which the students participate.

The GED Advisory Committee asked the GED Testing Service to explore other options to meet the concerns of both GEDTS and the GED Administrators. The GED Testing Service has been charged by the two oversight panels to present finalized plans late next summer.

# *Panel of Experts Convenes, Advises GEDTS on Deaf Testing*

by Colleen Allen

In April 1993, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation gave the GED Testing Service a grant to investigate adaptations in GED testing for deaf or hard of hearing persons. According to Jean Lowe, Director of the GED Testing Service, "Since the mid-1980's, the GED Testing Service has taken on several outreach initiatives to meet the needs of special populations. Among those we seek to serve better are people who, because they are deaf or hard of hearing, may have difficulty with tests."

The deaf population differs from other groups with disabilities because even the "experts" do not agree on what constitutes an appropriate education for deaf persons. "The varying schools of thought are both significant and politically charged, " says Jean Lowe, "so, we invited people from all across the deaf community. Consensus building was really a key goal of the project."

With the grant, GEDTS hosted two meetings in 1994 to investigate the issue. Among the members of the deaf and testing communities who attended were Michael E. Ehringhaus and Judy L. Mounty, Educational Testing Service; David Fischer, Ohio Department of Education; Dr. Virginia Hecker, Utah School for the Deaf; Dr. David Martin and Marilyn Sas-Lehrer, Gallaudet University; Dr. Harold Mowl (a GED graduate), Rochester School for the Deaf; Dr. Wayne Patience, American College Testing Service; Beth Schreiber (hearing daughter of deaf parents), MCI Telecommunications Corporation; Claude L. Stout , Missouri Commission for the Deaf; Greg Ellis, Wilmington Regional Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and Rhona Hartman, HEATH Resource Center.

During the two meetings, GED Testing Service staff learned much about the deaf community, besides the wide-ranging viewpoints on instruction. For example, in deaf culture, being deaf or hard of hearing is not considered a "handicap." To this group, deaf or hard of hearing people simply belong to another culture in our multi-cultural society. Yet, because sign language is a visual form of communication, many deaf or hard of hearing candidates struggle with the reading skills needed to pass the GED Tests.

*The deaf population differs from other groups with disabilities because even the "experts" do not agree on what constitutes an appropriate education for deaf persons.*

Deaf or hard of hearing children born to deaf or hard of hearing parents who sign can be observed signing as early as six months of age. These children have very little difficulty with learning English later. Contrasted with this is the experience of deaf or hard of hearing children who are born to hearing parents. These children frequently are not taught any communicative skills until they begin kindergarten around age five. As a result, they face more difficulty with language skills, both written and signed, for their entire lives. Participants, however, deter-

*continued on page 12*

# Big Picture: What Does "Numeracy" Mean?

***Numeracy is a term increasingly used in publications aimed at adult educators, yet its meaning and purpose may be unclear. This article briefly examines the importance of numeracy and the implications for those working with the GED Tests. Readers who are interested in a more in-depth discussion of the numeracy issue are encouraged to examine the publications listed under "additional reading."***

by Iddo Gal

The GED Tests measure the "major and lasting" educational skills and concepts learned at the high school level that contribute to successful functioning of adults in our society. What are the lasting outcomes of a high school's mathematics education component? In reflecting on this question, consider that high schools may aim at multiple goals. These would include activities aimed at:

1. Handling functional tasks (e.g., shopping, home, crafts)
2. Coping with workplace demands
3. Further formal learning
4. Gaining knowledge for self-development
5. Being aware of trends and events of societal interest (regarding, e.g., pollution, crime, poverty, employment)
6. Participating in public debate or community action
7. Helping children with school work

How well do schools address this range of educational goals? So far, the mathematics curriculum in most high schools appears to have been geared mainly toward preparing students for colleges and post-secondary institutions; it places emphasis on abstract, college-related topics, mainly advanced algebra and calculus. Students who do not cope well with such topics, which many high school math teachers view as "real" math, are often banished into general mathematics courses, which these teachers often consider mathematically "uninteresting".

Advanced algebra and calculus courses hold obvious value for some students. Yet, more than half of U.S. 18-year-olds don't go on to college, and, of those who do, many will not take more math when they get to campus. For this reason, we need to examine how schools have been preparing students for the other types of life goals listed above, and whether the mathematical skills implied by such additional goals should also be considered part of the major and lasting outcomes of high school education. Below are some observations about the compatibility of traditional mathematics curricula with the goals listed above.

A. Certain topics included in the high school math curriculum, such as trigonometry, advanced algebra, or calculus, seldom come up in the lives of most adults. At the same time, insufficient attention is paid by schools to developing the estimation skills adults need to handle tasks which do not require precise calculations, and to "number sense" skills, relating the meanings people attach to numbers. Examples of "number sense" would include grasping the big numbers used in discussing corporate or government budget cuts, or small numbers, such as those involved in evaluating risks.

B. Most adults, regardless of their occupation or living environment, need to be able to plan, handle, and monitor the use of resources, such as money and supplies, or time and people. Such tasks require people to optimize the use of resources, often in the presence of conflicting goals and demands. The skills needed to handle such tasks often differ markedly from those needed to solve the word problems which schools use to simulate real-world dilemmas.

C. Adults often need to be able to handle functional tasks involving numbers embedded in text—comprehending a problem and choosing an action based on data from forms, schedules, manuals, technical, and financial documents. Most high school and adult mathematics instruction, however, tends to rely on textbooks and workbooks which use "distilled" language that does not replicate the types of texts and communicative demands found outside the school.

D. Mathematics instruction in the U.S. has traditionally emphasized procedural skills, and paid little attention to development of interpretive skills. Such skills are essential if students are to become informed citizens who can make sense of verbal or text-based messages that touch on quantitative issues but that do not involve direct manipulation of numbers .



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Consider the importance of an adult's ability to understand the results of a recent poll or medical experiment. Comprehending newspaper articles or statements on TV requires the student develop reading, writing, comprehension, and critical thinking skills, simultaneously with mathematical skills, and develop conceptual understanding, rather than computational prowess.

Numeracy is a concept without a precise definition. However, we use the term to make sure we focus on the goal of education (becoming numerate) as we contemplate the means of education (learning mathematics). The term numeracy describes the aggregate of skills, knowledge, beliefs, dispositions, and habits of mind—as well as the general communicative and problem-solving skills—that people need in order to effectively handle real-world situations or interpretative tasks with embedded mathematical or quantifiable elements.

The major and lasting outcome of the mathematical component of high school education should be much broader than knowing mathematical procedures and being able to solve brief word problems. Using the term "numeracy" as a term parallel to literacy should help us bear in mind that (a) the range of skills and dispositions required for effective functioning in most life contexts is much wider, and often quite different, than what has been traditionally addressed in K-12 mathematics education, and (b) in many life situations, adults need to seamlessly integrate the use of mathematical with linguistic or communication skills.

*Mathematics instruction in the U.S. has traditionally... paid little attention to development of interpretive skills. Such skills are essential if students are to become informed citizens who can make sense of verbal or text-based messages that touch on quantitative issues but that do not involve direct manipulation of numbers.*

Similar to the goal of developing "mathematical power," advocated by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics as part of its reform agenda, "numeracy" outlines an educational vision which should be embraced by the entire K-12 and adult education system. Evaluating the nature of students' numeracy requires tests that include much more than multiple-choice items, sophisticated as these may be. The communicative or text-related aspects of numeracy, and the need to ascertain people's ability to apply diverse tools and reasoning processes when solving problems that do not have right or wrong solutions, dictate that we continue to seek ways to improve the assessment methods now in use.

*Iddo Gal is co-director of the National Center for Adult Literacy's Numeracy Project and former Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. He is now on the staff at the University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel.*

## Additional Reading

Gal, I. (1993). Issues and Challenges in Adult Numeracy. Technical Report TR93-15. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania.

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National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), (1989). Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics. Reston, VA: NCTM.

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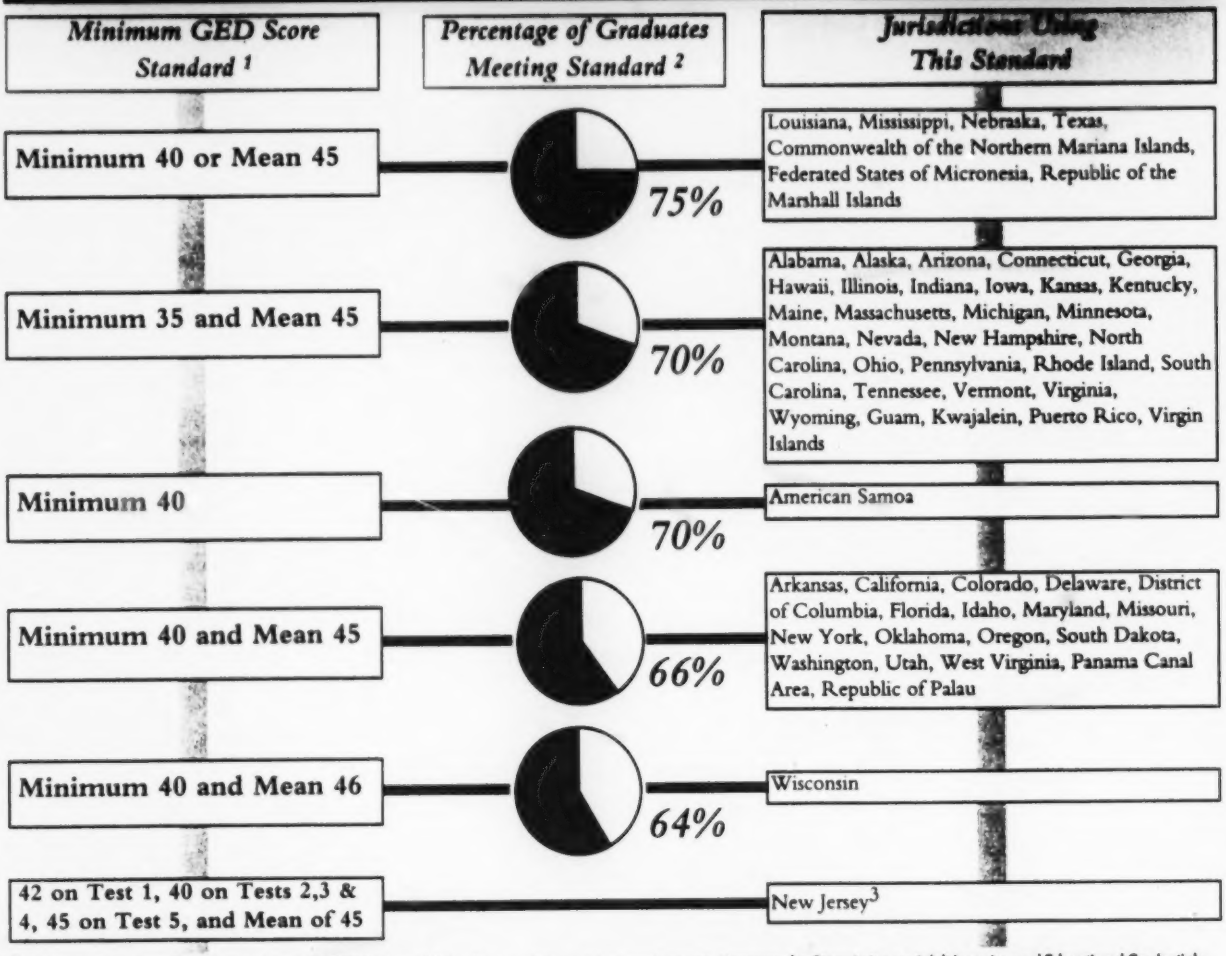
## U.S. GED Passing Score Requirements and Percentage of U.S. High School Seniors Meeting Standard by Jurisdiction

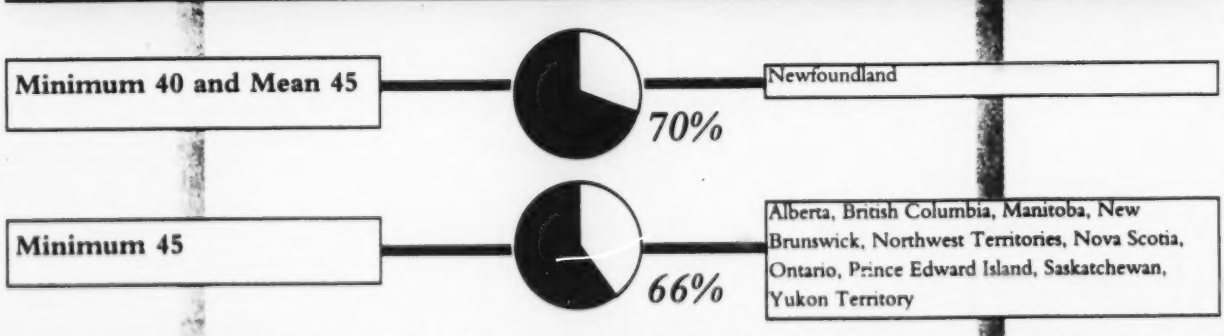

Minimum GED Score Standard [1]
Percentage of Graduates Meeting Standard [2]
Jurisdictions Using This Standard
Minimum 40 or Mean 45
75%
Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Texas, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands
Minimum 35 and Mean 45
70%
Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Wyoming, Guam, Kwajalein, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Minimum 40
70%
American Samoa
Minimum 40 and Mean 45
66%
Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, Utah, West Virginia, Panama Canal Area, Republic of Palau
Minimum 40 and Mean 46
64%
Wisconsin
42 on Test 1, 40 on Tests 2,3 & 4, 45 on Test 5, and Mean of 45
New Jersey[3]

[1] Each state or territory that contracts to use the GED Tests establishes its own minimum score requirements. However, the Commission on Adult Learning and Educational Credentials requires that such score requirements be set at a standard no lower than that which would result from requiring: a minimum standard score of 40 on each test in the battery or an average standard score of at least 45 on all tests in the battery. In the U.S., this minimum standard of "Minimum 40 or Mean 45" was met by 75% of the 1987 high school norm group.

[2] U.S. percentages are based on data from a national sample of graduating high school seniors who took all five GED Tests in the Spring of 1987.

[3] New Jersey's standard exceeds the minimum; however, this score combination was not included in the 1987 standardization study.

## Canadian GED Passing Score Requirements and Estimated Percentage of Canada's High School Seniors Meeting Standard by Jurisdiction


Minimum 40 and Mean 45
70%
Newfoundland
Minimum 45
66%
Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Yukon Territory

These percentages are estimates based on conditional probabilities. The exact percentages of Canadian high school seniors meeting these score requirements could not be calculated directly because although all five tests in the GED battery were administered in the Canadian norming study, there was not a sample of students who took all five tests.



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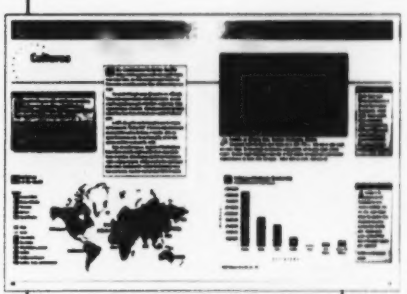

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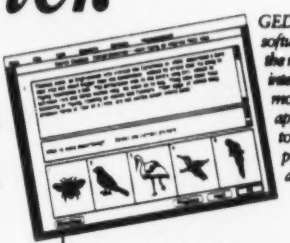

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*No Substitute continued from page 5*

*(3) Examinees and secure test forms must be supervised at all times.*
When an Examiner leaves, s/he provides an open door to temptation. An extra Examiner should be available for every testing session.

*(4) Test loss reports should be thorough and detailed.*
The report provides an opportunity to examine all procedures at a testing center—each one is a significant part of the picture. Experience shows that it's never just a single missing step that causes a test compromise. A thorough report answers these questions: How are test materials received, stored, and inventoried? What do the test logs look like? Are instructions read aloud, or do staff members rely on their recollection? Is there an emergency "plan B"? Are examinees allowed to leave the testing room without supervision during a test? Does the Examiner keep the candidates seated according to a seating chart and store unused test booklets securely?

As an experienced well-regarded Examiner, Ms. Brown fit the profile of an Examiner most likely to face a test compromise. Over time, she made small incremental adjustments to standard GEDTS policies. At the time, each modification seemed okay. In her first report, Ms. Brown recounted why it made sense to have a candidate approach the Examiner's desk — the very activity that probably cost her the test.

A GED test battery costs $350,000 to develop. We, very literally, cannot afford test compromise. Neither can the candidates who rely on GED testing as they look for employment and apply to college.

*Deaf Panel continued from page 7*

mined that the academic standards should remain the same for deaf or hard of hearing candidates as for other GED candidates.

With at least five known sign languages and systems in use in the United States alone, it would not now be financially possible to develop five corresponding GED Tests. In addition, developing a sign language form of the GED Tests would be in conflict with the GED Testing Service policy on Foreign Language Test Development. The committee determined that it is appropriate to require high school graduates who are deaf or hard of hearing to read English in the five test areas.

Although GEDTS's current accommodations do meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, participants at the June 1994 meeting offered improvements to the current accommodations. These changes will be included in Sections 7 and 9 of the new *GED Examiner's Manual*, scheduled for publication later this year.

The committee recommended that the GED Testing Service grant extra time to deaf or hard of hearing examinees and that GEDTS accept verification of need from a variety of sources, including school records.

Because sign language and not English, is often the "native" language of deaf or hard of hearing GED examinees, and ASL has no sign for the concept of "essay," the essay portion of the writing test poses a special difficulty. One participant from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) outlined the adaptations ETS is making to the National Teachers Exam for deaf or hard of hearing candidates. As a result, the committee recommended that deaf or hard of hearing GED examinees be allowed to sign to themselves, using video equipment, as a means of drafting of their essay. As it did with the other improvements to established accommodations, the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials approved the GED Testing Service's recommendation for this accommodation, as long as the final result is a written essay.

*Deaf or hard of hearing children born to deaf or hard of hearing parents who sign can be observed signing as early as six months of age. These children have very little difficulty with learning English later.*

Despite ADA requirements, interpreters for deaf or hard of hearing candidates are not available in many geographic areas. At testing centers in rural and sparsely populat-

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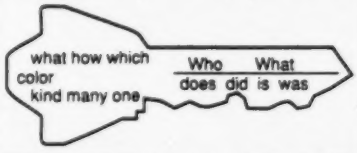


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ed areas it is sometimes difficult to locate interpreters who are not related to the examinee. To improve access for deaf or hard of hearing GED candidates, the committee recommended that GEDTS develop a video that provides testing instructions in a combination of American Sign Language (ASL) and signed English accompanied by open captions. The GED Testing Service, with the help of Gallaudet University, has now produced such a video. Copies of the draft version of the tape can be borrowed on an as-needed basis from GED Administrators and from the GED Testing Service. Finalized versions of the video will be available from the GED Fulfillment Service in 1996.

*Colleen Allen was the Project Manager for the Kellogg grant project during her tenure at the GED Testing Service. She is now with the ACE's Center for Leadership Development.*


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# "Diploma" Jurisdictions

## United States

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

## Canada

Alberta, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan.

## U.S. Territories

American Samoa, Guam, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands.

# Institutional Resources Turn Into Assets for Phoenix, Arizona Chief Examiner

by Mel Rife

At the corner of 40th Street and Washington in Phoenix, Arizona, a marquee reads "GED Testing Services — Tues. and Thurs."

The Chief Examiner responsible for this announcement is Lana Shepard of GateWay Community College. "I wanted to find a way to advertise that we do GED testing at GateWay. So, I asked if the announcement could be put on the marquee."

The marquee, at the southwest corner of GateWay's campus is used by the college to announced classes and other events at the college and gets changed every week. Shepard indicated that the college promised her advertising space throughout the year whenever there was space available. She says she knew that many people passed the college every day and she thought it would be an excellent way to get the word out. So far the response has been positive. Calls inquiring about testing times and other information have increased. Some people, according to Shepard, were very surprised to find out that GateWay offered GED testing.

*"[GED] students benefit by being on campus and having access to the same services as other college students. This also provides a smoother transition to college if the graduate decides to attend."*

In addition to the marquee announcements, Lana goes to senior citizens centers, youth centers and to supermarkets to distribute information about the GED Tests. "The number of people using the testing service at the college has really increased since we started marketing the program," she said.

Collaboration with the instructional GED component (RADAR) has resulted in high retention rates in the GED classes and in an increasing number of students enrolling in college after earning their GED diploma. "Students benefit by being on campus and having access to the same services as other college students," Lana added. "This also provides a smoother transition to college if the graduate decides to attend."

*Mel Rife is the Editor of the **Arizona GED Examiner's Chronicle**. This story is adapted from one appearing in the newsletter's March 95 edition.*


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### External Diploma Expands to 13th State

Illinois will join the ranks of states offering the EDP (External Diploma Program) on November 10, 1995. Training will take place at two sites, one in Chicago and one north of Chicago, in St. Charles. Other states offering the EDP are CT, DC, KY, MD, ND, NY, OR, RI, UT, VA, WI, and WV.

What's more, the national EDP office has produced a new partnership brochure that explains why business, labor, community organizations and community colleges should be interested in the EDP, and how potential partners can become involved. To order this brochure, to order the EDP video, *Competence Deserves Recognition*, and/or to obtain more information about sites in your locale, ☎ EDP office at (202) 939-9475.

### AAACE Conference Meets in Kansas City, MO

The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) will host its annual conference this year at the Allis Plaza Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. For information ☎ (202) 429-5131.

### Arizona GED Turns 50

The State of Arizona celebrates its 50th GED anniversary in September with special events. For information ☎ Pat Taylor (602) 542-5281.

### US Department of Ed Updates Web Site

The National Library of Education recently unveiled the U.S. Department of Education's new & improved World Wide Web home page...still at the same address (http://www.ed.gov), but thoroughly redesigned with new features and data. Whether you seek information about available grants or curriculum, the ED home page can point you in the right direction. Graphical features have text-only equivalents to serve users with visual impairments as well as the many educators with slow modems, older equipment, or text-only Web browsers. Improved links and "Search" features lets users scan the full text of ED's entire collection for a word or phrase. For more Web sites, see below.

### Older Students' Share of College Forces On the Rise

College students age 24 and older now make up 42% of the U.S. undergraduate population. The National Center for Education Statistics' April 1995 report, *Profile of Older Undergraduates: 1989-90*, supports the notion that the definition of the "traditional" college student is changing...about 9% of older undergrads entered postsecondary education with a GED credential. For a copy of NCES 95-167, ✉ U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328.

## Web Sites to See...

**C-SPAN** ..... http://www.c-span.org
**Department of Education** ..... http://www.ed.gov
**Dr. E's Compendium** ..... http://www.oak-ridge.com/ierdrep1.html
**ERIC** ..... http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec
**Health & Human Services** ..... http://www.os.dhhs.gov
**Library of Congress** ..... http://lcweb.loc.gov or http://www.loc.gov
**Smithsonian Institution** ..... http://www/si/sgi.com
**US Postal Service** ..... http://www/usps.gov
**World Fact Book** ... http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/95fact/index.html
**Yahoo (search engine)** ..... http://www/yahoo.com

### New Math, Physics Series Features Sports Heroes

ESPN, the cable sports network, is coming to the rescue of teachers who are struggling for ideas on how to teach subjects that students ages 13 to 35 find "scary" or "difficult." A new program, *SportsFigures*, uses sports to demonstrate math and physics theories in action.

Each week during the school year, teachers can videotape a 30-minute show in which star athletes play professor. In one segment, San Francisco 49ers Quarterback Steve Young explains vectors by demonstrating how a quarterback anticipates where a receiver will catch the football. The show airs Tuesdays at 2:00 pm and 2:30 pm on ESPN2.

Free teacher's guides and low-cost copies of the show are available from your cable company or ✉ Cable in the Classroom Division, ESPN, Inc., ESPN Plaza, Bristol, CT, 06010 ☎ (203) 585-2000.

### President Clinton Wants Internet in Every Classroom by 2000

Speaking in San Francisco this September, President Bill Clinton called for the public and private sectors to build a partnership that would make the Internet available to every U.S. classroom by the year 2000.

In announcing the new goal, Clinton said that teaching children to communicate via computer is "as essential as teaching them to read and write." The President acknowledged that the "high-tech barnraising" would take the same "enormous effort" that building the interstate transportation system did during the middle half of this century.

The White House plans to release a plan for reaching the goal later this fall.

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# Maryland GED Alumni Organize Outing

**October 8, Baltimore, MD**

Baltimore's beautiful Camden Yards ballpark and the last Orioles game of the season created the backdrop for the first big event of the Maryland GED Alumni Association.

Members of the association and their guests relaxed under a blue sky and a light Chesapeake Bay breeze as they watched shortstop Cal Ripken and the Orioles tie the American League record they set a decade ago for the longest shutout streak. Baltimore is less than 50 miles from Washington, so GED Testing Service staff members Cathy Allin, Fred Edwards, Jean Lowe, and Christine Zimmer brought their friends along and joined the Alums for the day.

Organizers hosted a pre-game party in the designated hitter's lounge where Nancy Grasmick, the Maryland Superintendent of Schools, talked about the opportunity GED program provides. Next, Jean Lowe, Director of the GED Testing Service, followed up, congratulating the association on the event. Finally, Herb Brown, the association's president, offered welcoming comments. A typical ballpark lunch of hot dogs, popcorn, sodas and beer followed.

Members then sought out their block of seats and enjoyed the game together. Representative Kweisi Mfume (D-MD), a GED graduate, had been scheduled to talk at the seventh inning stretch, but the national budget debates kept him away. "We did get an awfully nice letter from him about the value of the GED program, " noted Maryland's GED Administrator Mary Ann Corley. Organizers of the event also arranged to have the Alumni and their guests recognized on the stadium's giant television screen.

*Organizers of the event arranged to have the Alumni and their guests recognized on the stadium's giant television screen.*

The group started a couple of years ago with a few committed GED graduates and some help from Dr. Corley. According to Jean Lowe, "the group has gotten off to a great start. They have helped us identify an excellent GED graduate, Herb Brown, to serve on the GED Advisory Committee. It would be great if GED grads everywhere had this kind of support and leadership network."

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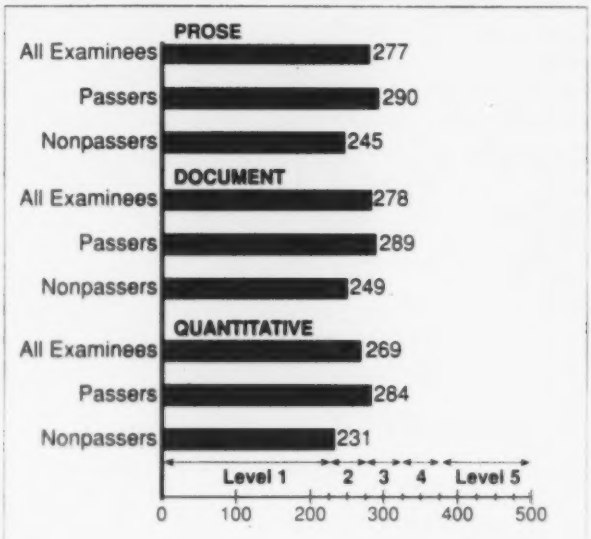
# GED-NALS Comparison Study Illustrates Skill Levels of GED Graduates

Passing the GED Tests signifies, on average, the attainment of a level of literacy that is widely viewed as necessary for social and economic advancement as well as for exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This is one of the key implications of findings from the newly released GED-NALS Comparison Study, a joint research project of the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education and Educational Testing Service (ETS).

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) was developed by ETS for the U.S. Department of Education in 1992. The survey used three assessments to evaluate the document, prose, and quantitative literacy skills of adults throughout the United States on three corresponding scales, each of which is divided into five levels. Level 1 (scores of 0–225) indicates the lowest level of literacy; Level 2 (low) covers scores ranging from 226 to 275, Level 3 (moderate), scores 276 to 325, and Level 4 (high), scores from 326 to 375. Level 5 (scores 376–500) indicates the highest. A table illustrating some sample tasks and their relative location on the scales can be found on page 6.

In 1993, a national sample of GED examinees in the U.S. who were taking the English-language version of the tests was asked to also take the three NALS assessments. According to Janet Baldwin, Director of Research and Test Validation for the GED Testing Service, "The study provided a unique opportunity to describe the English-language literacy skills of examinees who passed the GED Tests—and those who didn't—using an external measure. This, in effect, extends the definition of passing the tests beyond the interpretations we've been able to make so far." Until now, the interpretations of passing the GED Tests have been based only on how a national sample of graduating high school seniors had performed on the GED Tests. In addition, the research examined what the GED and NALS instruments measure in common and what other skills each measures separately.




Source: American Council on Education and Educational Testing Service. *The Literacy Proficiencies of GED Candidates: Results from the GED–NALS Comparison Study*. 1993.

**In a recent study, people who passed the GED Tests scored, on average, in Level 3 of the NALS literacy scales, while those who didn't pass scored, on average, in Level 2.**

The three NALS scales attempt to capture three aspects of literacy function. According to the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, prose literacy, is comprised of "the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction." Document literacy, as defined by the NALS, consists of the "knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in materials

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# New Year's Resolution: Tell the Facts as Well as the Stories

by Jean H. Lowe

Across the United States, adult educators are uncertain about the future for their programs, their students, and themselves. Will adult education programs as we know them survive? What will be the impact of the new federal budget? Will block grants remake the delivery systems now in place? How can adult education produce genuine, lasting learning gains? How can programs get the texts and computer materials they need to be effective?

*Decision makers...want, need, and deserve reliable data and statistics which prove to them that the human element of the story is true.*

If the answers that we give to these questions are to be convincing, we must not only tell stories, but also provide facts supporting our claims. Conventional Washington wisdom holds that, for decision makers in Congress to support proposed legislation, they must appreciate the human impact of the expenditures they are asked to make. But they also want, need, and deserve reliable data and statistics which prove to them that the human element of the story is true.

In the past, we have been high on sentiment and student appreciation and low on facts and documentation. In protecting adult ed students from what we may have perceived as unfair external pressure to succeed quickly, we have neglected to justify the need for substantive instruction. In our pride over what we've accomplished, often against great odds, we have failed to make the case that we need better materials, training, and support. We have not thoroughly examined the societal impacts of our programs, assuming instead that these outcomes are as obvious to everyone else as they are to us. Now we have solid research evidence. We should use it.

Two years ago, when Educational Testing Service (ETS) completed the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) for the U.S. Department of Education, the nation got its first view of how strongly one's level of literacy proficiency relates to one's performance on a range of variables. The NALS documented the correlation between literacy proficiencies and achievement of success in employment, getting off welfare, postsecondary education, even health and voter participation. These are strong correlations; I recall ETS's Irwin Kirsch saying that the relationship between earnings and literacy is stronger than the link between earnings and either race *or* gender.

For the first time, there is sound data about the relationship between earning passing scores on the GED Tests and literacy proficiencies as measured on the NALS scales. While the GED Tests certify an individual's knowledge and skills, the tests also help to define goals that, for many adults, promote professional and academic development. The impact of this phenomenon has been wide and varied. GED graduates are successful leaders in every field — military and government service, entertainment, law, social welfare, business, education, and academic research. But when we fail to provide our audiences with the facts along with those familiar stories of personal achievement, we neglect to inform adequately and to influence responsibly.

The message of the new NALS–GED comparison study is crying to be heard. The readers of *GED Items* must help us to spread the word. I hope that you will make a New Year's resolution along with us at the GED Testing Service: Tell the whole story of adult education and the GED.

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# College Instructor/Tennis Coach/GED Graduate Values Lessons in Life Experience

***"I've always liked to talk, so of course I wanted to teach!" says Anthony Fox, a member of the Liberal Arts and General Education Faculty at Regents College, part of the University of the State of New York. But he didn't march straight through school and college into his current position as an instructor of communications at Sage College in Albany, New York. The twists and turns of his career more closely resemble those of the Regents College students he teaches.***

**by Margaret Mirabelli**

In high school, Tony enthusiastically embraced the notion of teaching. As a member of Illinois Association of Future Teachers of America, he was nominated from the floor of the 1962 convention to become Vice President of the group. He toured the state, speaking on teaching as a career.

But youth and a desire for independence led him to leave high school before graduation and join the military. After several years of service, he returned to civilian life and worked at a variety of low-skill jobs—working as a stock clerk, driving a cab, driving a bus. It was while driving a cab that he received further impetus toward teaching.

An avid, but largely self-taught tennis player, Tony found himself deep in conversation with the mother of Melvin Searles, a top-flight state tennis pro. She promised that her son would make time to give Tony a lesson. Searles gave the lesson for free, asking only that Tony pass the favor on to someone else like himself. Tony became a tennis coach. Indeed, coaching is the model he has taken for his academic teaching, believing as he does that students have much they can contribute to their own learning. He also became a Literacy Volunteer. While he was teaching other adults to read, a fellow instructor urged him to earn his high school diploma by taking the GED Tests, which he passed with ease.

GED graduate Anthony L. Fox now teaches college-level speech and communication courses.

Tony now ran into a serious snag in his educational plans. He had assumed that he could use his GI benefits at any time—but unfortunately the time limit had passed. Persisting, he found that Illinois had a program to aid Vietnam veterans. With that aid and the money he was making from teaching tennis, he enrolled at Joliet Junior College, where he earned his associate degree in 1983. By 1985 he had his bachelor's degree, *cum laude*, from Northern Illinois University.

A professor in Tony's semantics course regarded Tony as having extraordinary complex speaking and language abilities. He urged Tony to enter graduate school. Ever independent, Tony did other things first, but in 1992 he did return—to earn a master's in Communication Studies from Northern Illinois University. Tony's wife, who teaches criminal justice at Ohio Northern, has a doctorate, and he is thinking that he may continue on himself.

When Regents College approached him to join the faculty, he already knew a certain amount about the College, having heard of it while trying to figure out how to continue his own education. Everything Regents College seeks to achieve in removing barriers for the adult learner fits with Tony's philosophy of education and educational access. His own experience has made him particularly sympathetic to the financial hurdles that adult students face and to their need for flexible, self-paced programs.

Tony teaches speech, interpersonal communication, communication theory, and introduction to

*continued on page 12*

# An Equation for Success: Reading for Pleasure Equals Reading for Understanding

by Carol Jago

Many of the adult learners who come to the GED Tests are not avid readers. Reading is something that they learned how to do in school, but they may never have developed the reading habit. These students covered the required pages for the teacher's ubiquitous book report, but they found little joy in the act and certainly no sense of urgency to find their next book.

As a high school English teacher, I know that my finest students—those who earn high SAT scores and top grades, those who write with sophistication, those who succeed in college—are almost always readers. How did they get that way? By reading, of course! The more a person reads, the easier the act becomes, the faster the pages fly by, the simpler one's basic school tasks become. The text of a test is no great hurdle to a fluent reader. But for the person who never develops this fluency, every task that involves reading is a chore.

The key to helping students achieve reading fluency is to lure them, through their interests, into reading for pleasure. Surround your students with seductive texts: *People* magazine, romances, sports biographies, the latest movie scripts. "Trash!" some will say, "It's time with Mark Twain, not Quentin Tarentino, that will help my students pass the GED." I disagree. Poor readers don't know either author. Avid readers find time for both.

Lack of time is the most common excuse students of all ages offer as the reason they don't read. That's why pleasure reading needs to be part of the school curriculum.

Stephen Krashen, linguistics professor at the University of California, makes the case for what he calls "Free Voluntary Reading." His studies demonstrate that pleasure reading "is the major source of our literacy development, that it is responsible for our reading comprehension ability, much of our vocabulary competence, spelling ability and writing style, and for our ability to use complex grammatical constructions." (*The Power of Reading, Insights from the Research*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited. 1993).

Some teachers worry about the content and caliber of the books that students choose when left to their own devices, preferring the messages of classic literature to those of Stephen King. And every year I do have a few avid readers who only read "good" books. The problem is that until students are fluent readers, reading the classics is such a strain that, rather than struggle through *Great Expectations*, they choose not to read at all.

I worry more about this non-reader than I do about the skewed values of a Danielle Steele novel. Avid readers rarely get stuck in one genre for long. They move freely—wildly at times—from *Sweet Valley High* to *Jane Eyre* to science fiction and back again. No one volume is dangerous to these readers because it's not long before they are consuming the next one.

Along with providing practice with sample GED passages and questions, any course preparing students for the Interpreting Literature and the Arts test should include pleasure reading as part of the curriculum. Many adults haven't much liked what they have found between the covers of books until now and so they've given up looking.

*The text of a test is no great hurdle to a fluent reader...For the person who never develops this fluency, every task that involves reading is a chore.*

It may be that, by selecting books for our students, we have ruined one of reading's greatest pleasures—that of choice. In our attempt to give students only the best, we may have inadvertently sent them the message that their reading choices—comic books, sports pages, horror stories—are inferior. In doing so, we further undermine their confidence in selecting books to read.

Surround your students with shiny new books and make time for them to choose and read and reject and choose again. They will hone their comprehension and interpretive skills before your eyes.

*Carol Jago chairs the English Department at Santa Monica High School and has served as a final form reviewer for the Interpreting Literature and the Arts Test. She is also the director of the California Literature Project, UCLA.*



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# Howdy, Partner!

***Many External Diploma Program (EDP) local sites have formed partnerships with businesses, labor, and community organizations in their communities.***

by **Katherine Lowndes**

Since EDP is most appropriate for the older workforce, especially current and transitional workers, this opportunity often appeals to companies and unions already invested in educating their members, concerned with increasing the employment security of their workforce with a portable credential, or involved with upgrading the skills of workers beyond a "basic literacy" levels.

*As block grants shift the adult education emphasis toward workforce development and the demand for community partners thus increases, such liaisons will be a very important concept in the future.*

In areas where EDP is not yet offered, we often hear from the potential partners first. ACE/EDP does not conduct an EDP training until a local school board has agreed to confer a traditional high school diploma to the EDP graduates at that site and the state department of education has granted their approval to having EDP offered in their state. However, the partners often get the ball rolling to make both of these events happen. One example is the UAW/GM–EDP partnership in Janesville, Wisconsin. The UAW/GM education and training people heard of the EDP and wanted to offer it to their workers as another way of fulfilling their mandate to offer an alternative high school program. The UAW–GM convinced the local technical college and the local school boards of the value of the EDP for their employees. The local technical college and 13 local school boards decided to lend their support to the EDP, allowing for the establishment of an EDP site in Janesville.

Sometimes we hear from community colleges or other local education agencies that are interested in establishing an EDP site and already have an agreement to provide educational programs to a business or union. In Illinois, this sort of program is under way. Staff at Rock Valley Community College will be trained in December, and they'll then begin offering EDP both at the main campus and at a UAW/Chrysler plant nearby. Rock Valley currently delivers educational services to the plant; the EDP will be one more program that they'll offer.

In St. Charles, Illinois, the Literacy Volunteers of America already were part of a partnership with the local library. When they heard of EDP, they wanted to offer it in their community, so they brought together several local mid-sized businesses as well as the Rotary as additional partners, to ensure that EDP would be available for the older, experienced adults for whom it was designed. In Connecticut, the Urban League, several school districts and a health care union have formed a partnership to deliver the EDP to nursing home aides. As block grants shift the adult education emphasis toward workforce development and the demand for community partners thus increases, such liaisons will be a very important concept in the future.

These are just a few examples of existing EDP partnerships. Perhaps they'll give you an idea of who you might contact in your community to establish a partnership that will support the EDP, both with appropriate clientele and financial support, too. If you would like to receive our new partnership brochure or speak with us about setting up an EDP partnership in your community, please contact the EDP office at (202) 939-9475.

*Katherine Lowndes is the Assistant Director of the External Diploma Program.*

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## Sample Tasks Along the Three NALS Literacy Scales

| NALS Scale | Prose | Document | Quantitative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1<br>Very Low<br>Score Range 0–225 | • Identify country in short article<br>• Underline sentence explaining action stated in short article | • Sign your name<br>• Using pie graph, locate type of vehicle having specific sales | • Total a bank deposit entry |
| Level 2<br>Low<br>Score Range 226–275 | • Underline meaning of a term in government brochure<br>• Interpret instructions from appliance warranty | • Locate intersection on street map<br>• Identify and enter information on application for social security card | • Calculate postage and fees for certified mail<br>• Calculate total cost of purchase from an order form |
| Level 3<br>Moderate<br>Score Range 276–325 | • Write brief letter explaining error on credit card bill<br>• Read lengthy article to identify two behaviors meeting stated condition | • Use bus schedule to determine appropriate bus for given set of conditions | • Using calculator, calculate difference between regular and sale price from an advertisement |
| Level 4<br>High<br>Score Range 326–375 | • State in writing argument made in lengthy newspaper article<br>• Compare two metaphors used in poem | • Identify correct percentage meeting specified conditions from a table of such information | • Using information stated in news article, calculate amount of money that should go to raising a child |
| Level 5<br>Very High<br>Score Range 376–500 | • Compare approaches stated in narrative on growing up<br>• Interpret brief phrase from lengthy news article | • Using a table about parental involvement in school survey, write a paragraph summarizing areas where parents and teachers agree | • Calculate miles per gallon using data given on mileage record chart<br>• Using calculator, determine the total cost of carpet to cover a room |

Source: *National Adult Literacy Survey. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 1992.*


## DAVE THOMAS VIDEOTAPES NOW AVAILABLE!

Dave Thomas, recent GED graduate, founder and owner of Wendy's Restaurants, has recorded a videotape PSA providing viewers with information about the GED Hotline. To receive this latest VHS tape, order item #251019 and send $20.00 (US) plus shipping and handling to the address below. An audio tape version is also available (item #251020, $5.00).

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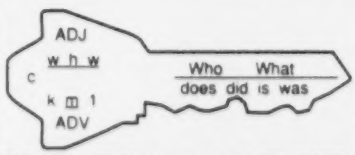


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# American Council on Education Sets GED's Record Straight For Governors, Kassebaum

November 27, Washington DC

A letter from Robert H. Atwell, President of the American Council on Education (ACE), the GED Testing Service's parent association, responded today to statements made by the leadership of the National Governors Association's Human Resources Committee. Atwell countered a remark contained in correspondence from the National Governor's Association (NGA) to Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R, KS) concerning the Senate's version of the Workforce Development Act (S. 143).

The letter to Senator Kassebaum from Governors Arne Carlson (R, MN), Tom Carper (D, DE) and NGA Executive Director Robert Scheppach stated, "There is no clear evidence that having a GED increases individuals' employability or earnings."

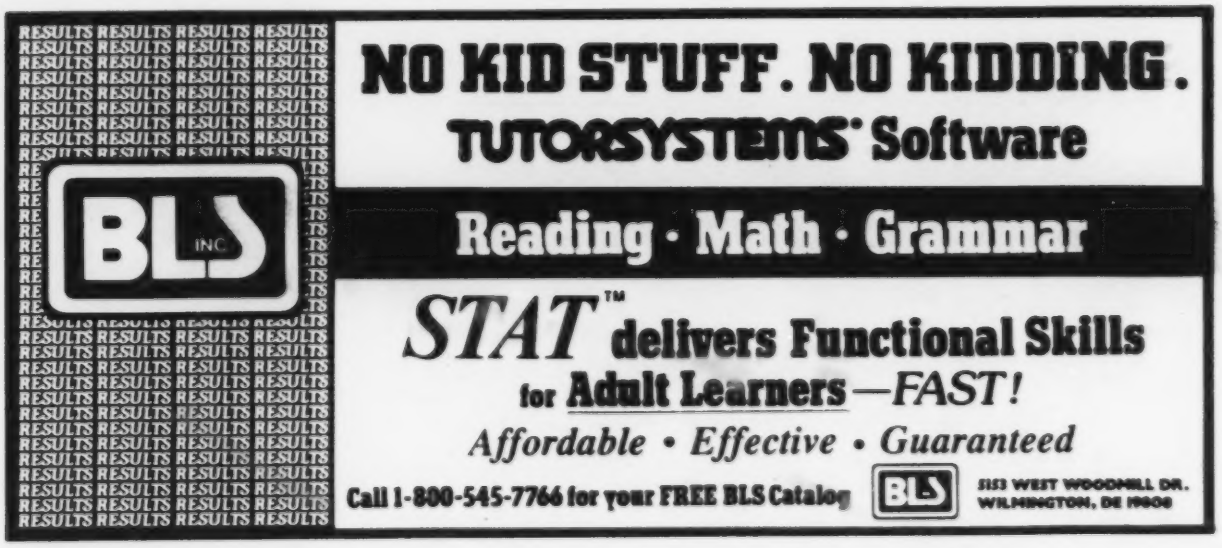
Atwell's reply reads, in part: "ACE takes no position regarding the specific provision you address in your letter—attempting to expand eligibility for job training to include those who have not attained a high school diploma or a GED. We do, however, take strong exception to the way you have characterized the GED and misrepresented the research evidence. The preponderance of research demonstrates that the GED makes a substantial difference in the lives of those who pass these tests." He labeled the NGA's statement "simplistic and misleading."

Accompanying Atwell's letter is a fact sheet that outlines some of the more significant findings of recent research. The fact sheet lists, among other information, the following impacts of earning a GED diploma:

- GED graduates, on average, earn $2,040 more per year than high school dropouts.
- GED graduates are more likely than high school dropouts to be working full time.
- More than 85 percent of GED graduates surveyed in 1993 planned to enroll in postsecondary educational programs.
- GED graduates in community colleges, on average, perform on a par with traditional high school graduates in number of credits earned and grade point average.

The American Council on Education is a non-profit membership association representing higher education institutions and other educational concerns. ACE is dedicated to the belief that equal educational opportunity and a strong higher education system are essential cornerstones of a democratic society. The association has administered the GED testing program in its various forms since the end of World War II.

*GEDTS encourages program specialists to use the fact sheet in their outreach efforts. For your convenience, a copy of the fact sheet is included on page 8 of this issue.*

# GED Testing Service

## *Fact Sheet*

The General Educational Development Tests (GED) allow adults to demonstrate that they have acquired a level of learning comparable to that of high school graduates and thus to earn a high school equivalency credential. Recognized nationwide by employers and institutions of higher education, the GED program has increased education and employment opportunities for nearly 12 million adults since 1942. At present, the GED Testing program enables nearly half a million adults every year to obtain high school equivalency diplomas—about one in seven of all high school diplomas issued annually in the United States.

The GED Tests are rigorous: the battery consists of five separate tests (writing skills, social studies, science, interpreting literature and the arts, and mathematics) that measure the general skills and knowledge acquired in a four-year high school program of study. The GED Tests, which include a writing sample, take seven and one-half hours to complete. They are administered each spring to a nationally representative sample of graduating high school seniors to establish the GED passing scores. Each state administers the GED Tests and issues credentials based on its own score requirements. To pass, adults must surpass the performance of 30 percent of graduating high school seniors; 73 percent passed the GED Tests in 1994.

IMPACT OF A GED CREDENTIAL:

- GED graduates, on average, earn $2,040 more per year than high school dropouts.
- GED graduates are more likely than high school dropouts to receive additional training after earning their credential.
- GED graduates are more likely than high school dropouts to be working full time.
- The wages of GED graduates grew at a faster rate after earning the credential.
- Passing the GED, on average, signifies the attainment of a level of literacy widely viewed as necessary for social and economic advancement.
- More than four in five GED graduates (85 percent) surveyed in 1993 planned to enroll in postsecondary educational programs.
- According to a national longitudinal study published in 1993, more than two in five GED graduates (43 percent) attended two- or four-year colleges after receiving their credential.
- GED graduates in community colleges, on average, perform on a par with traditional high school graduates in number of credits earned and grade point average.



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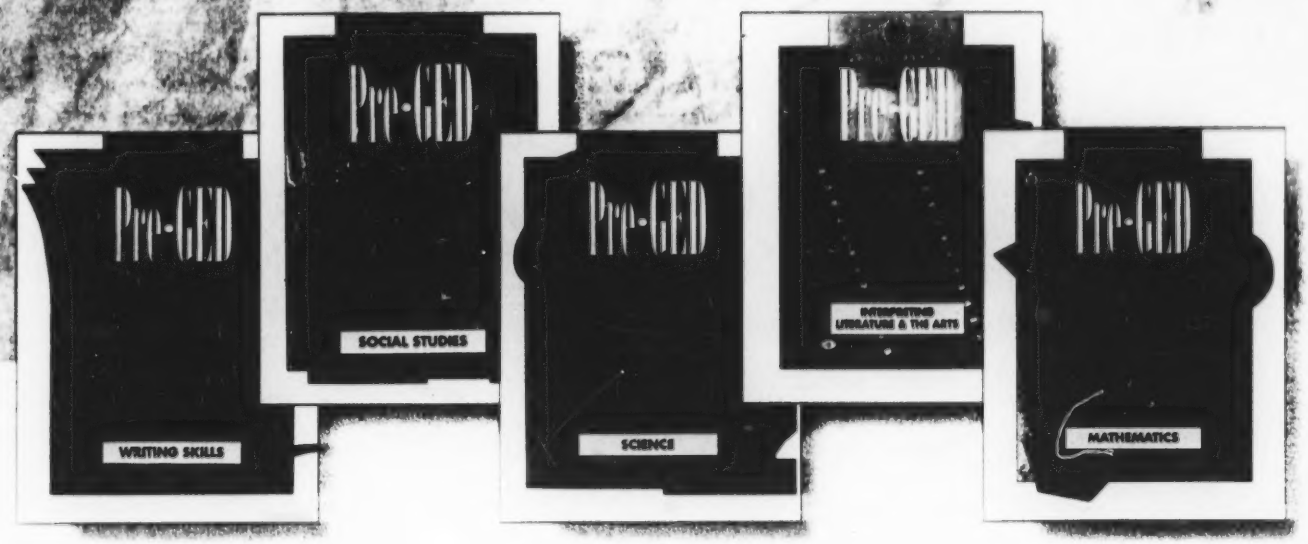


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*GED–NALS from page 1*

that include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and graphs." Quantitative literacy, as the name suggests, incorporates "the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, using numbers embedded in printed materials." Such activities include balancing a checkbook, and completing an order form.

The GED Tests and the NALS assessments "overlap" each other to a large degree in the skills they measure—researchers found a correlation of 0.78. Both instruments appear to measure verbal comprehension and reasoning skills. However, because the GED Tests examine high school level academic ability, they also measure writing mechanics and mathematics. The NALS assessments, on the other hand, also measure unique aspects of document literacy. Literacy tasks are an integral part of what is taught in high school; thus the strong correlation between the two measures is not surprising.

The average scores of those who passed the GED Tests fell solidly in the Level 3 (moderate) range on all three scales. As expected, those who met the score requirements for their state's high school equivalency credential ("passers") displayed much stronger prose, document, and literacy skills than those who did not pass ("nonpassers"). The scores of nonpassers fell, on average, into Level 2. However, researchers noted some differences among demographic groups. White GED examinees, on average, demonstrated stronger literacy skills than Hispanic examinees, who in turn displayed stronger skills than African American test-takers. White and Hispanic examinees were also more likely to pass the GED Tests than their African American counterparts. Examinees who reported visual impairments demonstrated weaker prose and quantitative literacy skills and were less likely to pass the GED Tests than those who did not have vision problems.

Approximately 30 percent of GED examinees in the survey reported that they had participated in a preparation program (other than regular school) to improve their reading, writing, and math skills. These individuals, on average, demonstrated lower scores on all three literacy scales than did those who weren't enrolled in programs.

Additionally, GED examinees who reported that they had relied most heavily on formal classes for preparation had lower average literacy scores than those who did not prepare or who simply took the Official GED Practice Tests. "What these findings suggest," says Baldwin, "is that individuals with limited literacy skills are more likely to seek out or be referred to basic skills programs than those who have stronger skills, and may need to spend more time in those classes in order to develop the level of skill they need in order to pass the GED Tests. The survey data can't tell us, however, whether program participants had lower skills before they enrolled or how much their skills improved as a result of their work in a preparation program."

*White GED examinees, on average, demonstrated stronger literacy skills than Hispanic examinees, who in turn displayed stronger skills than African American test-takers.*

GED examinees in the survey who were currently working, part time or full time, displayed higher average quantitative literacy scores

*continued on page 12*

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### Poetry Contest Under Way

Prizes totalling $24,000 will be awarded to more than 250 poets in this year's North American Open Poetry Contest. The contest is open to everyone and it's free. Every poem entered has the chance to be included in a hardbound anthology.

To enter send ONE poem, 20 lines or under, on a single page containing the poet's name and address. ✉ The National Library of Poetry, 11419 Cronridge Dr., P.O. Box 704-1942, Owings Mills, MD 21117. Contest begins January 1.

### COABE Comes to Pittsburgh

Mark your calendars! The Three Rivers City will welcome this year's Commission on Adult Basic Education National Conference. The main conference will take place on May 16, 17, and 18, 1996, with pre-conference institutes on May 14 and 15.

Conference activities will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. ✉ Judith Aaronson, 2600 East Carson St., Pittsburgh, PA 15203. ☎ (412) 481-4836, fax (412) 481-0187.

### Mathematics Networking Available for Teachers of Adults

The Adult Numeracy Practitioner Network is a community dedicated to quality math instruction at the adult level. Members work to encourage support, collaboration and leadership among adult instructors and work to influence policy and practice in adult math instruction. The network was founded to address the "fact that K–12 math organizations do not presently attend to adult math education in noncollege contexts, and literacy organizations usually pay little or no attention to mathematical issues." To subscribe to *The Math Practitioner*, contact:

New England: Nick Lavorato
New Haven Adult Education
580 Ella Grasso Boulevard
New Haven CT 06519

Midwest: Janice Phillips
William Harper Rainey College
1200 W. Algonquin
Palatine, IL 60067

South Central: Pam Wall
Associated Builders & Contractors
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Midatlantic: Ellen McDevitt
Carlow College Adult Learning
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Pittsburgh PA 15213

Pacific North: Susan Cowles
Linn-Benton Community College
6500 SW Pacific Boulevard
Albany OR 97321

Pacific/Southwest: Melissa Mellissinos
P.O. Box 927187
San Diego, CA 92122

Mountains/Plains: Rose Steiner
Billings Adult Ed Center
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*Life Experience continued from page 3*

media courses. He remains active as a tennis coach. Additionally, he and his wife juggle the logistics of a long distance marriage! At least his children are now grown up. His son is co-owner of a cellular phone business in Chicago, and his daughter is a doctor in Africa.

*"...most colleges insist that learning take place only in the classroom. Does this mean that life's teachings have less value? I hope not."*

*—Anthony L. Fox*

"Life frequently teaches more than the classroom," says Tony. "Yet most colleges insist that learning take place only in the classroom. Does this mean that life's teachings have less value? I hope not. Regents College offers a way to use life's teachings to meet one's educational goals."

*Margaret Mirabelli is the editor of* ***Regents College Reports****, where this story first appeared earlier this year. To learn more about Regents College programs, call (518) 464-8500, weekdays except Tuesday 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.*

**"The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. All history will convince you of this, and that wisdom and penetration are the fruit of experience, not the lessons of retirement and leisure. Great necessities call out great virtues."**

***—Abigail Adams, 1780***

*GED–NALS continued from page 10*

than those who were unemployed, while there were no significant differences in their average prose or document literacy scores. This finding suggests that, among the GED population at least, literacy skills in the quantitative area may be more strongly linked to employment outcomes than are prose and document literacy skills.

"As we look for ways to improve our adult education and lifelong learning programs, this study might provide some valuable guidance," says Baldwin, "not only to adult educators, but also to policy makers, other researchers and the general public."

*The report,* ***The Literacy Proficiencies of GED Candidates: Results from the GED–NALS Comparison Study*** *(item 250802,* ***$20.00****) will be available in mid–January 1996 from the GED Fulfillment House, (301) 604-9073.*

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